

MILITARY CHAPLAINS'

REVIEW

1986







# **Military Chaplains' Review**

**Training For Combat Ministry**

**The Chaplain at the  
National Training Center**

**Summer 1986**



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Vol. 15, No. 3**







## **Preface**

The *Military Chaplains' Review* is designed as a medium in which those interested in the military chaplaincy can share with chaplains the product of their experience and research. We welcome articles which are directly concerned with supporting and strengthening chaplains professionally. Preference will be given to those articles having lasting value as reference material.

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The *Military Chaplains' Review* is published quarterly. The opinions reflected in each article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Chief of Chaplains or the Department of the Army. When used in this publication, the terms "he," "him," and "his" are intended to include both the masculine and feminine genders; exceptions will be noted.

Articles should be submitted in duplicate, double spaced, to the Editor, *Military Chaplains' Review*, United States Army Chaplain Board, Watters Hall, Bldg. 1207, Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703. Articles should be 12 to 20 pages in length and, when appropriate, should be carefully documented. Detailed editorial guidelines are available from the editor.

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Persons interested in contributing an article on one of the themes listed above should coordinate with the editor to ensure that the contribution fits well with other articles planned for the issue.

*The Military Chaplains' Review* also prints an occasional nonthematic issue. Any subject having to do with chaplain ministry is appropriate for such issues.

# **The National Training Center**

## **Command Perspective**

**Sergeant First Class Armando Carrasco**

The National Training Center has a two-fold mission: to provide tough, realistic, combined arms training at battalion task force level using both live fire and opposing forces; and to provide a data source for training doctrine, organization and equipment improvement.

Learning to win on the fast paced, intense, dynamic combined arms battlefield requires that units be challenged with realistic situations which demand rapid assessments, timely decision-making, and effective employment of high technology weapons and firepower. The National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, meets these requirements with an intensive, simulated combat environment.

Heavy brigades of United States Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) rotate to the NTC, tailored for combat, as armored and mechanized infantry battalion task forces supported by artillery, air defense, engineers, aviation, combat service support units and brigade headquarters. Major fighting systems—tanks and armored personnel carriers—are provided to units by the NTC. The rest of the brigade's equipment and rolling stock is transported from home station. Over 1,100 vehicles and 3,500 soldiers are transported to Fort Irwin for each rotation. The brigade, with its supporting arms, provides the necessary backdrop to focus on battalion task force training and evaluation.

At the National Training Center, battalion-sized armor and mechanized units are challenged for fourteen days and nights in highly realistic live-fire exercises and in stressful force-on-force engagements where they are confronted by appropriately sized opposing forces (OPFOR) trained in Soviet tactics.



Sergeant Carrasco's present assignment is with the Public Affairs Office, National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, where he serves as Public Affairs Supervisor and Media Relations Officer. He is a graduate of the Defense Information School's Noncommissioned Officer's Basic Course, the Advance Defense Information Specialist Course and the Adjutant General Noncommissioned Officer Course.



Why battalion-sized task forces? American military doctrine states that the battalion task force is a basic tool of land warfare. It is a force specially tailored with tanks and infantry supported mortars, artillery, attack helicopters, and close air support; all to bear the brunt of battle. It is at the battalion task force level that planning and execution converge. The requirement to convert the tactical plan into action is one of the most difficult missions in the United States Army—a mission which is seldom adequately practiced.

Some of the many reasons for this were mentioned in a recent letter from General John A. Wickham, Jr., Army Chief of Staff. General Wickham wrote, “Modern weapon systems are often highly complex and diverse. These weapons have changed the tempo, lethality and spread of battle. Land which was once ample for training entire divisions is today scarcely adequate for training brigades and, in some cases, battalions.” Training space requirements and the costs associated with the instrumentation necessary to conduct and analyze task force training were the underlying reasons for the establishment of a single training center to serve FORSCOM maneuver units.

The NTC, with its 1000 square miles of training area and state of the art instrumentation, provides the training environment necessary to establish tough, realistic battle conditions as well as the means to objectively measure whether standards are met. Historically, commanders have had to lead their units into combat without the opportunity to train in task force formations. This circumstance has been costly in lives and equipment. Actual combat is a harsh training ground. At the NTC, battalion commanders are able to deploy their troops in task force formations, learn the hard lessons of war, and do so before the first day of battle.

The time a unit spends at the NTC is short. But the training it receives is so thorough, so demanding and vital, that it impacts significantly on both individual and unit readiness. It prepares units to fight effectively on the first day of war. Most importantly, it will save lives.

## **It's Not A Game**

The National Training Center provides an unequaled opportunity for the battalion task force commander to exercise the full range of his force. Moreover, the conditions that prevail at the NTC closely approach those of actual combat. Moreover, the terrain and the climate are harsh and serve to intensify the stress and fatigue for men and material.

The uniqueness of National Training Center cannot be overstated. No other training exercises in the free world approach the realism routinely achieved at the NTC. No other training presents in combination the scope, scale, and intensity of effort that is captured at the NTC. The instrumented, one-of-a-kind battlefield provides instant feedback and heightens learning at all levels. It is a place where soldiers, leaders, and units can train and learn and improve fighting capability without actual casualties or loss of equipment. They do not just go through the motions of war; they actually live it.

As a result, the NTC provides commanders the opportunity to train as they will fight. Moreover, it develops a level of stress unequaled outside of combat. Going to the NTC is, for most soldiers, the first time they are exposed to many of the elements of stress inherent to combat. Thousands of lives might have been saved in past wars if this type of realistic training had been available.

The NTC teaches combat doctrine in a straightforward way. The battles are hard fought. Action takes place day and night, in temperatures as high as 130 degrees Fahrenheit and well below zero. The dirt and dust, tear gas, smoke, simulated chemical agents, and relentless sun all contribute to the realism.

The “wounded” must be evacuated, damaged vehicles removed, and new personnel and equipment requisitioned. Units, failing to bring up ammunition, do without. If the food is lost, everyone goes hungry. If soldiers misplace their gas masks, they are gassed. Nothing interferes with realism. Training at the NTC is the toughest in the U.S. Army. It is unit training at its best.

Soldiers learn. They learn the limits of men’s minds and bodies. They learn about the durability of their equipment, and they learn not to repeat mistakes. From each learning experience the task force grows in competence and confidence. At the end of the 14-day combat cycle, a better task force emerges—not perfect, but harder, tougher, and smarter than when it started.

To survive and win the next war, the Army must eliminate the mistakes of inexperienced soldiers and leaders in combat. War is not the place to learn from mistakes. The National Training Center provides a learning environment designed to overcome such inexperience and to help the Army win tomorrow’s key battles. But most importantly, the NTC is the place where a soldier or leader can make a mistake and live to learn from it.

## **High Tech Battlefield**

Situated throughout Fort Irwin’s vast training area are 44 solar powered, “interrogator” relay stations. These stations are the first stop for the many signals sent from special transponders on the OPFOR and player vehicles, weapons systems, and selected soldiers. This special instrumentation, which is linked with the Multiple

Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES), provides unprecedented amounts of objective information to analysts watching on computer terminals and television screens miles away from the battle.

When a signal is sent, it is received by a relay station and then transmitted to a computer station high atop a mountain. There the signals are triangulated to determine location. Additionally, data such as the type of vehicle, type of weapon fired, how many rounds fired, from what weapon and at what time, and other information are decoded from the relayed signals and transmitted down 13 miles of cable to a base computer at the Operations Center located in the heart of the Fort Irwin garrison area.

As many as eight mobile units and crews accompany the units on missions to send live TV pictures back to the Operations Center. In the Operations Center, other video crews record the action being transmitted back by microwave. In addition, they also monitor and record 40 different channels of live, tactical radio communications taking place during the battle.

All of the video and radio recordings are time tagged for playback at the After Action Review (AAR). Video crews maintain and operate two air-conditioned AAR vans which seat 25 people. These vans are used to deliver an "instrumented AAR" to the commanders in the field—complete with audio, video, and computer graphics stored from the battle three hours earlier.

Training and doctrine specialists in the Operations Center, called Training Analysis and Feedback Officers (TAFO), keep in contact with the Combat Trainers (CT) in the field and watch their computer and TV screens for significant events. All of this information helps the CTs and TAFOs develop the AAR and the take-home package with which a commander can review his unit's activities and integrate the valuable NTC training feedback into his training plan at home station.

When training soldiers for combat, the historical problem has always been one of realism. Before the National Training Center was developed, Army training was of the "bang you're dead; no I shot you first" variety. Only blank rounds were fired, and it was left up to umpires with clipboards and rule books to estimate the casualties. What the umpire didn't see, didn't count, and what they did see was often arguable.

## **Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) and Combat Trainers**

The answer to the problem of training for combat was eye-safe "laser bullets." The Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System makes battlefield training seem real. Soldiers and vehicles are equipped with MILES detectors. If a vehicle is "killed", "hit," or "near-missed,"



an alarm sounds and a strobe light flashes. After nearly six years of development, MILES has been issued to all Army divisions. MILES makes weapon training seem like the real thing. It helps the soldier figure out what he did wrong, and why he was “killed.” If soldiers can learn to survive under this kind of realistic battlefield training, they will be able to survive and win in actual combat.

Combat Trainers (CTs), also known as Observers-Controllers, are the coaches and trainers in the field alongside the units. Their primary mission is to know Army tactical doctrine inside and out, to follow the battle, and to provide the soldiers and officers with advice on how to improve. They correlate subjective observation with the data collected from the After Action Reviews.

During rotations, the CTs are as busy as the unit in training. They are present 24 hours a day with unit counterparts from battalion command and staff down to platoon level. They observe and analyze unit performance throughout the planning, preparation, and execution of all missions. These observations become points of discussion during the AAR. In their secondary mission as controllers, they ensure that the MILES equipment is battle-ready at all times and apply simulated battlefield effects by assessing casualties due to mines, artillery, air strikes, and chemical warfare. Units receive constant feedback during the training period from After Action Reviews (AARs), which are the heart of the learning process at the NTC.

Even as the battle continues, both objective computer-gathered information and subjective field observations gathered by video cameras and the CTs, are fed to the Operations Center to be analyzed. Significant events which affect the outcome of the battle are isolated and their causes are determined. Violations of tactical doctrine are noted and substandard performances highlighted. These battle actions are played back for a review and critique following each live-fire and force-on-force exercise.

## **The Opposing Force**

At the NTC, the Opposing Force (OPFOR) makes the most important contribution to realistic training. The OPFOR is made up of approximately 1500 U.S. Army soldiers who are thoroughly trained as a Soviet motorized rifle regiment. In their OPFOR role, the soldiers attack unexpectedly, outnumber the defending U.S. units by at least three to one, and employ “dirty battlefield” techniques such as chemical warfare. In addition, the OPFOR also defends according to Soviet doctrine using appropriate force ratios.

The OPFOR uses U.S. equipment that has been visually modified to resemble Soviet-made equipment. The U.S. M551 “Sheridan” Armored Reconnaissance/Airborne Assault Vehicles have been modified with fiberglass to replicate the Soviet T-72 Tank,

Soviet-BMP Armored Personnel Carrier, Soviet-122 Self Propelled Howitzer, and Soviet ZSU-23-4 Anti-Aircraft Gun. Additionally, M882 light trucks have been modified to portray the Soviet BRDM-2 in three versions: Surface-to-air Missile Carrier, Reconnaissance, and an Anti-tank Missile Carrier. These vehicles are commonly referred to as VISMOS, short for "visual modifications."

The OPFOR, which spends a great deal of time in the field gaining expertise, offers an awesome sparring partner for the units that train at the NTC.

## **Force-On-Force**

Force-on-force training provides our troops the opportunity to operate against a live opposing force. Riflemen, gunners and armored vehicle crews engage live enemy targets: individuals, crew-served weapons, armored vehicles, and helicopters—all equipped with MILES.

Both sides suffer casualties as the battle progresses in accordance with the abilities of the soldiers and units involved. In this way, soldiers and leaders gain battlefield experience and improve individual and collective skills. Company commanders, battalion commanders, and staff members become more proficient at coordinating the elements of the combined arms team to accomplish the assigned mission with the least number of casualties. Commanders and staffs gain hands-on experience in planning, leading, and supporting fast-paced, free-play maneuvers.

The six basic engagement scenarios conducted include the following: 1. Movement to Contact, 2. Hasty Attack, 3. Deliberate Attack, 4. Defend in Sector, 5. Defend from Battle Position, and 6. Delay in Sector. Force ratios between the OPFOR and the task forces replicate in numbers and types of equipment what might be expected in a European conflict.

## **Live Fire Exercises**

Fort Irwin provides the space for task force offensive and defensive live fire exercises without the constraints of "barber poles" or other artificial control measures. This realistic battlefield is unique because it gives the task force the opportunity to practice its combat mission using live ammunition.

In the defense, the task force engages a motorized rifle regiment represented by computer-controlled targets deployed in successive bands to simulate movement. There are currently over 500 targets in the defensive array. When the system is complete there will be 1018 targets portraying a full motorized rifle regiment in the attack. There are 70 to 80 targets strategically placed in support of

the offensive scenario. This array of targets portray the forward elements of a Soviet defensive unit.

All targets used in the live fire exercise are radio controlled mechanisms which mount on either frontal or lateral view silhouettes of Soviet equipment. Targets are supplemented by pyrotechnic firing devices which “shoot back” using Hoffman charges to simulate “steel-on-steel” hits, and black smoke canisters to simulate burning vehicles.

In addition, some targets shoot back with “Smokey Sam” styrofoam missiles to simulate Sagger anti-tank guided missile firing. Target silhouettes are also equipped with laser hit detectors to allow MILES equipped anti-tank systems to participate and with thermal blankets to produce the heat signature for gunners using thermal sights.

The computer is able to speed up or slow down the advance of the enemy based on the task force’s success. Remote-controlled and man-portable television cameras record unit actions as hit data is generated and compiled by the computer. The Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise at the NTC is unique because, for the first time, direct fire, artillery, anti-tank missiles, attack helicopters and Air Force close air support weapons are brought together at battalion task force level in a realistic scenario.

Commanders and troops have an opportunity to coordinate available fire-power and to observe its effect against a simulated enemy. This skill is particularly significant since it develops the ability to rapidly and efficiently shift combat power throughout the battle area. Improvement of this skill will be a major factor in offsetting the numerical advantages potential adversaries enjoy.

## **Overall Training Benefits**

The NTC provides the members of each battalion and supporting unit a total experience which cannot be duplicated or even approached at home station. Just as the NTC serves participating unit training needs, it also provides an opportunity for the Army as a whole to improve its unit training method.

For the first time, the Army has an objective system to quantify unit performance in a realistic combat environment. Such a capability opens up exciting prospects for the development of better training methods and programs. Data collected at the NTC helps commanders objectively evaluate their unit’s performance. Over time, this data will also help the Army evaluate and improve training, tactics, doctrine, organizations, and weapons systems. It will also help to better correlate resources for force readiness. The National Training Center is changing the way the Army trains.



## **Impact Of NTC On Home Station Training**

Key to the final value of the National Training Center experience is the way units translate that experience into home station training. Over and over again units have demonstrated the ability to integrate the NTC experience into home station training. The four years of sustained NTC experience have caused a heightened awareness of training standards for combined arms forces. The unmatched intensity of the National Training Center's two-week scenario, with its exacting instrumented evaluation, has significantly contributed to raising the sights of unit training as well as leader training. In the Army's collective training experience, there has never been such a uniform insistence on the maintenance of standards in critical go-to-war skills.

## Groundwork For Ministry At The National Training Center

**Chaplain (COL) James W. White**

During the last couple of years, the chaplains' monthly training conferences have dramatically changed. While the subject matter has not changed, the socialization at the training conferences is remarkably different. In the 1970's, the conversation among the chaplains, waiting for the usual late arrivals and for the monthly training conference to begin, ordinarily centered on a few senior chaplains remembering and discussing their war experiences. This conversation above the coffee cups invoked the Tet Offensive, a battle at Chu Lai, or some other experience in the jungle and rice paddies of Viet Nam.

But now the socialization of that gaggle of chaplains is different. Now the centers of attention are the young chaplains—the captains and the majors—and they are talking about the battle for the Whale, the battle for Hill 910, or Red Pass Lake and Four Corners. An uninformed observer would wonder: Did I sleep through a war? What are these chaplains talking about? The answer, of course, is the chaplains are talking about the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

The National Training Center at Fort Irwin provides force on force and live fire training for Heavy and Light Forces with a realism previously unheard of during peacetime. It affords the chaplain and the chaplain assistant—the Unit Ministry Team—the most realistic training in combat ministry this side of actual warfare. The rotations to the National Training Center provide the chaplains and chaplain



Chaplain White, endorsed by the Presbyterian Church, USA, currently serves as Installation Staff Chaplain, Fort Irwin, California. Chaplain White is a graduate of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and holds an MA in sociology from Long Island University, New York. He is also a graduate of the Advanced Airborne Course (Jumpmaster) and Command and General Staff College. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal and Senior Parachutist Badge.

assistants an invaluable opportunity to learn, to practice, and to provide ministry under conditions comparable to combat. The Fort Irwin battlefield is highly mobile, stressful, demanding, and dangerous for the poorly prepared or careless chaplain and assistant. But with careful planning, and the deliberate integration of the unit ministry team activities into the Task Force Commander's overall exercise planning, this unique training experience provides the Unit Ministry Team an opportunity to learn and to grow in military ministry that is matched by no other training experience.

The place to begin planning for successful ministry at the National Training Center is at the home station. The leadership and expectations of the Division and Installation Chaplains are primary and crucial to the success of the Unit Ministry Teams at Fort Irwin. The Division and Installation Chaplains' leadership in training, concern for logistics, and emphasis on coordination, prepare the Unit Ministry Teams for the National Training Center experience.

Having now seen nineteen rotations of Unit Ministry Teams to the National Training Center, a pattern of performance is clear to me. There are two categories. The unit ministry teams who are well prepared, execute well, and those who come poorly prepared, execute very poorly. Our experience here in the "Presidio of the Mojave" tells us there is very little middle ground. The more rotations which come, the stronger the conviction that the "chaplain's battle" is won or lost at home station.

Chaplains and Unit Ministry Teams which come highly motivated, well trained and equipped, and who are integrated into the Task Force Commander's overall plan, have an invaluable experience at the National Training Center. They return to home station tested, exhausted, but matured. They are more self-confident, and they know battlefield ministry. On the other hand, chaplains and assistants who have not been read into the action, who have been patted on the head by a busy commander who says, "Chaplain, do good things for my troops," work without transport or priority or adequate preparation. They flounder in the desert counting the days that are left in the rotation and frustrated by it all.

## **Prepare for Success**

At the National Training Center, goggles, maps, and compasses are as essential as chaplain kits. There are many things that the Unit Ministry Team can do to prepare itself for a rotation at the National Training Center, but the starting point is land navigation. Fort Irwin is approximately the size of the state of Rhode Island, and all of it is desert. Fort Irwin, California, in the high Mojave desert, is barren earth and rugged mountains. To the inexperienced eye, it all looks alike. Only after one has been in the desert for a while, crossing the same areas over and over again, do terrain features become familiar



enough to be recognized by sight alone. In the desert the Basic Training course, “Land Navigation and Map Reading,” becomes very important again. Every Unit Ministry Team coming to Fort Irwin should be very familiar with the map of the terrain and the use of a compass.

When night falls in the desert, it falls. The lights of nearby cities do not glow over the skyline. Some teams are fortunate enough to come at a time when there is moonlight; and some others which have night vision devices, can operate at night with reasonable safety and effectiveness. We recommend that chaplains and Unit Ministry Teams limit their individual night travel to a minimum.

What makes a desert? The answer simply is the absence of ground or surface water. Sufficient intake of water is essential, especially during the high heat periods—nine months of the year—spring, summer and fall. Items of personal health and sanitation are critical, and practicing field sanitation and field personal health are vital to the continued functioning of the Unit Ministry Team. Take care of each other, be responsible, and be one another’s keeper. Old truths take on new meaning in the desert.

Plan well for the rotation to the National Training Center. Prepare and war-game worship services and anticipate needed materials. The best worship services on this highly mobile battlefield are short and impromptu. We call these worship services “Targets of Opportunity.” The large extravaganza, orchestrated by bringing battalions and companies together, are less successful. It is very difficult to mass troops for a worship service when the tactical scenario says to disperse the troops in open terrain with limited cover.

Ministry at the National Training Center provides an excellent opportunity to put good spiritual and inspirational literature in the hands of soldiers. A very big plus in ministry goes to those chaplains who bring significant quantities of quality reading materials for their soldiers. Moreover it is important to bring items for all faith groups so that Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish soldiers are given quality reading materials. Some Unit Ministry Teams bring funds from their local installation chaplains’ fund in the form of Traveler’s Checks to meet the special needs of soldiers that are caused by service in this unique place. For example, some offer mints or hard candy to soldiers whose throats are parched and dry, others distribute prestamped post cards to soldiers separated from those they love. These programs are very well received by the troops. Most unit ministry teams also bring extra water cans and water coolers. It seems they read somewhere about giving a cup of cool water.

The young chaplains of today are inventive, highly motivated, and I find them to be extremely exciting to work with at the National Training Center. Fort Irwin truly affords the Unit Ministry Team a unique opportunity to learn, to train, and to grow. I am firmly

convinced that the best ideas for ministry on the highly lethal, highly mobile battlefield of tomorrow are also still out there in the future. They are there to be discovered.

Already, however, there are a few things that we need to look at as a corps of chaplains coming out of the body of experience gained here at the National Training Center. One major concern we must have involves survivability of chaplains. More than 80% of the chaplains and assistants assigned to the maneuver battalions, OPFOR and Blue Force alike, engaged in force-on-force battles at Fort Irwin become casualties. Like any soldier, when the chaplain's and/or the assistant's individual MILES equipment goes off, it signals that they have been killed or seriously wounded. Now we know that our enthusiastic young chaplains and assistants, thinking themselves John Wayne at Iwo Jima, in a situation where the bullets are not real, go places and take chances that they would not take in actual combat. Four out of five chaplains and assistants, wearing MILES equipment and integrated with their units in the Fort Irwin battle scenario, become casualties.

I believe if we are to engage chaplains and Unit Ministry Teams in this highly lethal, highly mobile ministry, we need to provide them, at the least, with adequate communications equipment and night vision devices. The chaplain and Unit Ministry Team, operating without this equipment, are very limited in self-defense, navigation, and communication.

One of the innovative dimensions of our chaplain ministry at the National Training Center has to do with what chaplains bring to augment their chaplain-issued equipment. The chaplain's kit, as issued, is supplemented by a variety of items to enhance ministry and enrich worship. For example, many chaplains are taking innovative and elaborate sound equipment systems to the field. With such a broad use of tape recording and sound amplification devices being used, maybe we need to include portable sound systems as standard equipment for chaplains.

It is indeed a privilege to serve with the "Desert Ministry Team," on the shores of Bicycle Lake. When I was assigned here as Installation Chaplain, I knew immediately that an installation on a perpetual field training exercise would be different. This reality came home when I inspected the installation chaplain's transportation assets for the first time. They consisted of two desert sand M151 quarter-tons with cutter bars and no windshields. The NTC is not the place for the chaplain seeking the ordinary or the routine. Our life styles and ministry styles are geared to rotation schedules, not calendars. The term Rotation 86-8 has more meaning than April 1986. The National Training Center is truly a workaholics dream come true. On Easter Sunday, home and visitor forces were engaged in a full regimental attack and defense. Consequently, most of the



services were field services. For any chaplain or chaplain's assistant, who truly enjoys the rugged outdoors and field ministry, this is an excellent place to serve. The facilities of the Fort Irwin Chapel and post are good and constantly improving. The US Army is putting big bucks into Fort Irwin for the benefit and well-being of the people assigned here and their families. The Desert Ministry Team and the chapel are integral parts of community life at Fort Irwin. The attitude and cohesion of the military community here make it a very enjoyable and exciting place for ministry.

The articles which follow are by chaplains who, in our opinion, have ministered successfully to their soldiers and units on the exacting battlefield of the National Training Center. The authors were not chosen for their literary skills. They were selected because their ministry styles were successful at the NTC. They are not graduates of journalism school, but graduates of the NTC "School of Hard Knocks." Some are weathered veterans of several rotations.

Show me a chaplain who has experienced a couple of rotations at the National Training Center with his unit, and I will show you a chaplain who knows what's going on in tactical ministry today. They are chaplains and assistants, Unit Ministry Team members, who will not only serve well, but they will have enhanced their survivability skills on the battlefield. So rather than great literary articles, these articles reflect realistic training and experience. The notes came in to us on pieces of cardboard, on the back of DF's, and on scraps of paper. The wise chaplain or chaplain assistant who reads this issue of the journal without the experience of NTC rotations, will do well to have a yellow highlighting marker in hand. And at the Installation Monthly Training Conference if one or two weather-beaten young chaplains are holding forth in the corner talking about the battle for the "Whale," or telling what happened on the way to Anderson's Grave; go over, listen, and listen well.

## Chaplains

### At The National Training Center

Colonel Richard F. Keller

*Chaplain, your ministry is wherever you find it on the battlefield. Because of your religious training, you'll have no trouble ministering. Your problem will be finding the right place and time. That takes some personal, tactical savvy and lots of good map reading!*

These were my instructions to the brigade and battalion chaplains who went to the National Training Center in January of 1986. I repeat them here, because the chaplains went out and did exactly what I said—very successfully. How? I think it was because of their personal religious training, their sound implementation of doctrine in FM 16-5, and their personal tactical savvy.

Each chaplain's bedrock, his personal religious convictions, are solidly in place. These are vital because confidence stems from personal inner strength and knowledge. We have all endured classes where the speaker did not know his subject. His hesitation was easy to spot. His lack of eye contact, disconcerting. His unwillingness to answer questions, a dead giveaway. On the other hand, we have all been drawn to experts. They have something to say and offer. We seek them out in time of need; and, if they are helpful, we remember them and seek them out again and again. Chaplains whose convictions are weak, whose eye contact is poor, and whose bedrock religious beliefs are uncertain, will have poor prospects for helping



Colonel Keller was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of infantry at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington, in May of 1961. Since that time he has served overseas tours in Korea, Vietnam, and Germany. Colonel Keller has been an infantry platoon leader, company commander, and battalion commander. He has served as division G3 and G5, and he is a graduate of the Naval Command and Staff College and the Army War College. He currently commands the First Brigade, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), at Fort Carson, Colorado.

soldiers. Soldiers spot weaknesses instinctively. They avoid trusting those who are weak. They avoid discussing problems or even becoming friends with a chaplain whose religious underpinnings are suspect. For these reasons, I feel chaplains must truly examine their own personal religious convictions if they are to be credible with soldiers. If they truly love God and their fellowman and can talk about it comfortably with others, they will do okay with soldiers.

The chaplains of 1st Brigade are all exemplary in this regard. They work hard at staying in touch with themselves, their religion, and with soldiers. Workshops, retreats, professional study, and pastoral activities are frequent activities sponsored by the chaplains in the brigade. As a result, the chaplains are personally confident, and soldiers seek them out as friendly experts.

A second significant reason the 1st Brigade chaplains were successful at the National Training Center was that they were familiar with, and generally followed, the doctrine specified in FM 16-5. My advice to anyone would be—learn what's in FM 16-5 and deviate only as necessary. There isn't a field manual on the street which answers all questions or covers all situations, but FM 16-5 is sound in most respects, and particularly with regard to field ministry. Chapter 5 "Religious Support in Combat" has nifty subtitles which combat arms officers like to see in a chaplain's manual. For example, Section II is "Combat Fundamentals Applied to Religious Support." Section III is "The Airland Battle." Section VII is "Movement to Units and Soldiers in Combat." Selected subtitles are "Coverage of Casualties," "Raids and Deep Strikes," and "The Lull."

In my opinion, the reading is interesting, honest, and doctrinally sound. It is doctrine that certainly applies to ministry at the National Training Center, but the key to the practical application of any doctrine is sound judgment. In instances where FM 16-5 provides no guidance, chaplains should trust their gut feeling and do what they think is best. Higher headquarters cannot possibly provide guidance on every matter, either verbally or in writing. Where there is no guidance, chaplains should trust their instincts and seize the opportunity to do what seems best.

Finally, chaplains must possess personal tactical savvy. It is one thing to become schooled in personal religious beliefs and the contents of FM 16-5. It is quite another to apply that schooling and doctrine in the field. In this regard, there are two aspects which apply here, personal and professional. On the personal side, a chaplain must feel comfortable practicing field craft. That is, the chaplain must be personally able to live in the field for extended periods. The chaplain must have all his equipment and know how to use it. The chaplain must know where to get his jeep fixed and fueled, know where to live, how to care for his driver, and a whole host of basic



survival necessities. At the National Training Center, cutting corners on personal field craft has embarrassed many and killed a few.

A squad leader, who is not personally prepared for war, fights his squad poorly, sets a poor example, and frequently fails in his mission. A chaplain, who is equally unprepared and stays in the comfort of a large tent near food and water and never spends a night on the line with the soldiers, has no credibility with them. They are his congregation, yet they will shun him. To put an ancient theological truth in military terms, Christ was a great squad leader. He never asked his apostles to do anything He was not prepared to do. Certainly for that reason, He was respected and loved by His followers as a man, and had great credibility with them. Personal field hardships can be used to great advantage by chaplains.

There is another dimension of the chaplain's personal ministry in the field that speaks to the soldier in a different way. The chaplain's ministry of "goodies." What's a "goodie?" In the desert, almost anything. Ice, water, fruit, a newspaper, hot sauce. You name it. The Unit Ministry Team takes "goodies" to the field with them; and while visiting the soldiers, gives them away. The soldiers appreciate the thought, the "goodies," and the bearer. More than one field ministry has started by soldiers munching apples with a chaplain in the middle of the desert. It takes practice to become an accomplished soldier, but the payoff is big in terms of respect and value as a leader.

The second aspect of personal tactical savvy is professional. A chaplain needs to know how to read a map, and needs to understand a battalion operations order. The chaplain needs to attend the verbal order and ask questions. Where will the next battle be? When? What units are involved? Where will the wounded be taken? What is the meal cycle? Where are the resupply points? Where will replacements arrive? When? Who will have the toughest mission? The answers to questions like these will provide chaplains with a road map for ministry. Go where soldiers are preparing for battle. Go where new replacements arrive, and go where the wounded are. Tag along with the S1 or S4 or CSM and ask, ask, ask. Be a confident self starter, and your field ministry will fall into your hands. Once again, the chaplains that I've seen serving 1st Brigade at the National Training Center possessed outstanding personal tactical savvy which contributed immensely to their success.

Chaplains are God's constant reminder among us of His care for us all. That is why, on the battlefield, where God's call comes frequently and quickly, chaplains must be in the right place and the right time—with soldiers—for battlefield ministry.

## **Preparation For Ministry At The National Training Center**

**Chaplain (CPT) Daniel J. G. G. Block**

The National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, offers unique challenges in training and special opportunities for ministry. For the chaplains who train at Fort Irwin as part of a unit field training exercise, and for the Reserve and National Guard chaplains who train at Fort Irwin as individuals, effective ministry will require special preparation based on the mission, and the nature of the National Training Center itself. Chaplains, poorly prepared for ministry in this demanding setting, will soon find that they have become detractors, rather than assets, to their units. Chaplains attempting to function under such limitations will find ministry badly received, and undermined by their own lack of preparation.

The following thoughts are written, not by an expert on the subject, but by one who has had to prepare repeatedly for ministry at Fort Irwin. Sometimes those preparations have gone well, and ministry has been enhanced. At other times, poor preparation or lack of preparation has led to a minimizing of ministry and less than a successful mission. It is out of this process of trial and error that these comments are offered.

In order to plan for ministry there are minimal levels of knowledge that the chaplain ought to acquire before leaving his home station. Without this minimal knowledge the Unit Ministry Team, the chaplain, and the chaplain assistant, and the commander will make decisions on conjecture, rather than fact. Assumptions and conjectures are often incorrect and frequently misleading.



Chaplain Block, a pastor of the American Lutheran Church, is currently assigned as brigade chaplain for the 2nd Brigade, 7th Infantry Division (Light), Fort Ord, California, and as Lutheran pastor at Fort Ord. He is a graduate of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Previously assigned to the 14th Engineer Battalion, Chaplain Block served on numerous rotations to the National Training Center.

Before arriving, both members of the Unit Ministry Team should correctly understand all elements of METT-T. The first element of METT-T, MISSION, is fundamental to success at the National Training Center. The Unit Ministry Team must understand it. If the unit is to support the OPFOR, it will be important for both the chaplain and the chaplain assistant to have a working knowledge of the unit's support MISSION, and the Soviet mechanized tactics that will form the framework within which the unit will function. If the unit will form an element of the Blue Force, then it will be important for the unit ministry team to correctly understand the initial defensive MISSION of the unit, and subsequent counter-offensive MISSIONS.

No matter which side of the battle the unit is assigned to, it will be important for both members of the unit ministry team to have a thorough knowledge of the ENEMY. Understanding the ENEMY's identity, tactics, locations, beliefs, assumptions and standard operating procedures will give the unit ministry team a clear advantage in functioning in the hostile environment of battle.

TERRAIN will become a particularly important consideration at the National Training Center. To put it simply, the TERRAIN is inhospitable. Vast expanses of open, unmarked desert, broken by rugged rock outcroppings and hills are characteristic of the area. Within the NTC are large ground-to-ground, air-to-ground live fire zones. The unit ministry team that cannot read a map and use a compass, may well find itself involved in more than a training exercise.

Hot days, frigid nights, and parched landscapes are the norm. The unit ministry team that moves unnecessarily during the heat of midday, is unaware of basic water requirements. If the Unit Ministry Team fails to take seriously the TERRAIN requirements of the National Training Center, it will soon find itself concerned less with the accomplishing of ministry, and more with the maintenance of health.

TROOP needs, as always, must be taken into account by the team. How many soldiers will the team service? How will they be deployed? How long will they be in the field? What particular stresses will they endure? How, when, and where will the word of God be preached and the sacraments offered? All these questions and more must be considered by the chaplain and the chaplain assistant and answered before arriving at the training location.

For The Unit Ministry at the National Training Center, TIME is almost an enemy. Scenarios change quickly, and once action has been initiated, they move rapidly. In addition to the tangible gifts the chaplain may carry, the chaplain brings intangible gifts for the troops whose full appreciation and understanding demand time for meditation and reflection. Yet, time apart, reflective time, time marked by a



purposeful slowing of life—Sabbath time—is a luxury which cannot be tolerated in an NTC training cycle. If the chaplain is to remain effective, he will have to tailor ministry to fit the constraints of TIME imposed by the unit mission and enemy action. The chaplain who demands a full, one hour, worship service in the field setting; who is convinced that all counseling sessions require at least 45 minutes; or who is not prepared to lead worship at any time of any day with soldiers, will not easily fit into the National Training Center.

Besides being completely conversant with METT-T, there are other elements of knowledge that the unit ministry team will have to grasp in order to be fully functional at the National Training Center. Perhaps the first is: Why Fort Irwin? Whether or not the chaplain is interested in the answer, the chaplain can plan on being asked the question by soldiers, especially young soldiers, who find themselves hot, cold, thirsty, hungry, tired, and occasionally bored during a National Training Center rotation. The chaplain who wishes to frame an answer within a defensible ethical system needs to understand that the National Training Center offers terrain and cadre capable of providing the most realistic simulation of maneuver warfare available to our soldiers. Exposing commanders and soldiers to the discomfort of the National Training Center (long hours, field rations, constant movement, NBC warfare and defensive actions, heat, cold, homesickness, etc. . . .) provides for the unit and the individual precious training which may save lives if the unit is called to its war time mission. If the chaplain has not prepared himself with this understanding, the chaplain will not be able to answer the inevitable questions, and unit morale will suffer. The point is simple: “More sweat in peace means less blood in war.”

Although an understanding of the basic elements of METT-T, and the rationale for training at Fort Irwin before arriving at the National Training Center are essential for successful ministry, they will not long sustain the Unit Ministry Team after the rotation begins. Because the battle is a battle of maneuver, and because the OPFOR will employ authentic Soviet tactics, the situation will change rapidly and repeatedly. The Unit Ministry Team must have some way to keep up with these changes, if the team is to minister to the entire unit despite the shifting of positions, enemy incursions, and the closing of major supply routes.

I have found that the best way to provide the team with that information is for the commander to grant the chaplain access to the Tactical Operations Center (TOC). If the chaplain remains unobtrusive in the TOC, and does not pretend to be a tactician capable of providing advice to the operations staff, the chaplain is likely to retain the privilege of TOC access. If the commander is unwilling to provide the chaplain with TOC access, or if the

chaplain's behavior results in revocation of that access, the Unit Ministry Team must get information on the changing situation from other sources. Daily coordination with the S2 or S3, regular attendance at staff meetings, or information gathered at the Admin/Log Center are some ways of keeping informed. No matter what the source of the information, it is critical for the Unit Ministry Team to be well informed. The Unit Ministry Team, unaware of changing lines, that travels down a road formerly held by friendly forces to be captured by the enemy, is useless to the command no matter how well perfected the pastoral skills of the chaplain or the administrative skills of the chaplain assistant.

On a very cold and lonely night in February 1985, I found myself in the embarrassing and painful position of occupying a vehicle that had gone "nose down" over the side of a hill defilade position. The driver, unaccustomed to traveling in blackout drive, had driven too fast, failed to see the defensive position, and had consequently driven over the side, slamming both of us into the windshield. Despite the fact that the vehicle was equipped with four wheel drive, we were not able to remove it. A D-7 bulldozer finally pulled us out.

As the senior occupant of the vehicle, I was responsible. Upon return to home station, I was awarded the battalion's infamous "Crushed Helmet" prize, an award given to warrant or commissioned officers for stupidity in the performance of duty.

The point of the story is simple: if the position had been a fox hole instead of a hull defilade, my lack of attention would have resulted in the death of a soldier. A momentary loss of control resulted in a temporary loss of respect from my peers and an undermining of ministry within the battalion. The National Training Center is not the place to learn basic soldier skills.

Action at the National Training Center is too realistic for any chaplain or chaplain assistant to use the NTC as a location for brushing up on common or MOS-specific skills. What is needed at Fort Irwin are fully functional members of the Unit Ministry Team who can contribute to the team's and the unit's mission. A chaplain assistant, who cannot visually determine the difference between friendly and enemy armor at a distance, will eventually be either captured or killed, and may well take the chaplain along with him.

The prerequisite for being a functional minister at the National Training Center is to be first a functional soldier. No matter what the ministry skills of the team, those skills will be useless if the team does not possess the necessary soldier skills to sustain life and freedom.

In summary, the team must understand and be able to use METT-T, the rationale for NTC training, changes in the tactical situation, common soldier skills, and MOS-specific skills. However, the acquisition and practical use of knowledge alone will not prepare



the team for ministry at Fort Irwin. Other preparations must also be made.

Chaplains are support people within the Army. They are usually appreciated by commanders, staff, and soldiers as providing spiritual assistance, and as the representatives of religious institutions to which soldiers owe allegiance. Chaplains are not, however, seen as critical resources necessary for the accomplishing of a unit's tactical mission while in the midst of a fast moving battle. One small piece of evidence, among many, regarding that pervasive attitude can be found in the distribution of transportation resources. Most MTOEs simply do not provide organic transportation for the Unit Ministry Team. Further, some commanders are not aware of the critical importance of the chaplain's presence on the battlefield. Those commanders, who do not fully understand the importance of the chaplain's presence, are often unwilling to rearrange the distribution of vehicles in order to provide the Unit Ministry Team with transportation. Few things can inhibit the functioning of the Unit Ministry Team at Fort Irwin like the absence of reliable transportation.

At the National Training Center it is not unusual for elements of a unit to be ten, fifteen, twenty, or more kilometers away from the unit trains. Further, it may be several days before those far flung elements of the unit return to the area of the trains to resupply, perform maintenance, and rest. If the unit ministry team is located solely in the support area, then the chaplain will become the chaplain primarily to the medical aid station, mechanics, supply section, mess hall, and other occupants of the support area. In my opinion, because the Unit Ministry Team will not have shared the hardships or other experiences of the forward elements, ministry will have been impaired.

The unit ministry team must move forward, while remaining available to the entire unit. The best way to achieve that goal is to provide the Unit Ministry Team with organic transportation. In preparation for ministry at the National Training Center, the chaplain is well advised to discuss the problem in detail with the S-3 and unit commander, attempting to convince the commander that the team will be better able to serve the unit, and achieve the commander's goals, if provided with transportation.

If that discussion is unsuccessful, then the team needs to think through the problem of how it will provide for ministry throughout the unit's area of operation. Possible solutions to that problem are as varied as movement with the commander, movement with hot meals or supplies taken to forward elements, the employment of unit religious coordinators, and extended visits with individual forward elements of the parent unit. The combination of solutions that the

Unit Ministry Team must then employ will depend on the dispersion of the unit, the tactical situation, and the wishes of the commander.

Preparation for ministry at the National Training Center must include physical preparation. The desert can be brutal. The chaplain and the chaplain assistant will have to be physically ready to operate under the same conditions as all other members of the unit: searing days, frigid nights, winds laced with cutting grains of sand, and all with a very limited supply of water. Beyond the brutality of the desert, the requirements of maneuver warfare will physically tax the team. Constant movement, long duty hours, minimal sleep, few hot meals and a steady diet of MREs, continuous tension, and more missions than any team can accomplish are to be expected. In order to win the battle, the commander will push his men and machines to the limit of endurance and safety. If the Unit Ministry Team cannot keep up the pace, the team will cease to be viewed as an asset to the commander, and will be treated as the detractor that it has become. The National Training Center is no place for a roly-poly, out-of-shape, and overweight chaplain. Preparation for ministry at the NTC includes physical readiness.

The Unit Ministry Team may soon be given responsibility for the initial, front line response to battle fatigue casualties. It has been argued that because of the training, message, skills, and availability of the team to front line soldiers through the Forward Thrust doctrine, the chaplain and the chaplain assistant provide the best available response to battle fatigue. Further, the Israeli experience with battle fatigue appears to indicate that response to the problem close to the FLOT, with expeditious reintegration into the unit, results in a greatly improved rate of remission.

The responsibility for the Unit Ministry Team to respond to battle fatigue casualties implicitly expands ministry to new areas that, while related to current areas of ministry, are essentially unknown and remain unexperienced by most chaplains and chaplain assistants. Programs of instruction for both members of the team will prove helpful in providing the skills necessary to respond. However, no program of instruction, no matter how well constructed, will be able to provide the Unit Ministry Team with the practical experience required to respond efficiently to battle fatigue casualties in actual combat.

In this area the National Training Center can serve as a laboratory for Unit Ministry Teams, providing limited experience at managing something approaching battle fatigue in a controlled environment. The National Training Center provides almost all the variables necessary to initiate the onset of battle fatigue. While involved in an NTC rotation soldiers will suffer physical and psychological trauma. They will be separated from the communities that give them meaning. They will suffer sleep deprivation, and



occasional boredom. To a limited degree, they will be exposed to danger, and they may well experience the injury (or even accidental death) of companions. In such an environment, some soldiers will experience a withdrawal, an absence of meaning, and perhaps an inability to function.

In preparation for ministry at the National Training Center, both members of the unit ministry team should research the problem, read the available data, and be prepared to respond intelligently and compassionately. For younger chaplains and chaplain assistants, it would seem advisable to seek the guidance of older, supervisory personnel with combat experience.

Preparation for ministry in this area will include both the professional preparations of the chaplain, often in consultation with mental health specialists, as well as the preparations of the chaplain assistant for peer level service to fellow soldiers. Such a team approach will allow the Unit Ministry Team more avenues of response, and result in a higher success rate. However, such a team approach is possible only if the chaplain is willing to entrust portions of the mission and ministry to the chaplain assistant. A chaplain who is uncomfortable with the notion of lay ministry, and who retains the entire mission for himself, will hamper the work of his fellow team member, undermine mission accomplishment, and provide assistance to fewer soldiers.

The requirement for building teams in order to do ministry and secure mission accomplishment is necessary not just in response to battle fatigue, but in all areas of ministry at the National Training Center. There are simply more tasks to be completed than any battalion or brigade chaplain can single-handedly complete in the time provided. The wide dispersion of units, the degree of stress experienced by individual soldiers, the limitations imposed by terrain, weather, and tactical conditions, all militate against the successful operations of a one-man-show approach to ministry. The chaplain who is unwilling or unable to work with the enlisted member of the team, or with other Unit Ministry Teams will fail at the National Training Center. In preparation for ministry at the NTC the chaplain must develop, for lack of a more precise term, a sense of calling; a sense of the enlisted member of the team's calling; and an ability to work with fellow chaplains despite denominational, doctrinal, liturgical, or other differences. In short, the chaplain must carefully examine his perspective on ministry before arriving at the National Training Center.

Similarly, at some point both members of the team will have to accept their limitations. Inevitably, crises will occur when the team is absent or in another area; some soldiers, for a variety of legitimate reasons, will refuse the assistance of the team; and eventually even chaplains and chaplain assistants need to sleep. It will not be possible

for the unit ministry team to be all things to all persons.

In addition to implying an acceptance of human limitations on the part of team members, the size of the mission also implies that the chaplain, as the team leader, would be wise to seek to engage others in the business of ministry. Training soldiers for soldier-to-soldier ministry, employing unit religious coordinators, thoughtfully coordinating area and denominational coverage with fellow chaplains, and sticking to the business of ministry rather than becoming the unit morale and welfare officer are all ways of maximizing the effort. The expansion of ministry through these, and other means, are an important element in the team's preparations to function at Fort Irwin.

Spiritual preparation is an important area of concern for the chaplain and chaplain assistant anticipating a field training exercise at Fort Irwin. During the Unit Ministry Team's tenure at the National Training Center, they will encounter much that will challenge their religious assumptions. As commanders hasten to meet objectives, the Unit Ministry Team will find it difficult to find time for ministry. The team will have to struggle for time in which to engage soldiers with the gifts of God. For excessively sensitive individuals, it may become all too easy to interpret such battles for time as a rejection of the team, religion, and God.

Another potential attack on the team's spirituality resides in the very real danger present at the National Training Center: armor, dismounted infantry and engineers, night moves, rugged terrain, smoke, noise, and long hours stretching into long days. There is always the potential during an NTC rotation of training accidents resulting in serious injury or death. Because the unit, and individuals, will look to the chaplain for meaning in the event of such an injury or death, it is important that the Unit Ministry Team be prepared for such a tragedy before it happens.

Perhaps the greatest danger to the team's spirituality lies in fatigue. When the task becomes greater than those assigned to the task, it is easy to forget purpose and to become caught up in activity. Because the chaplain and the chaplain assistant deal in categories of meaning, it is important that they not become caught up in activity to the exclusion of purpose. As the senior member of the team, it will be the chaplain's responsibility to protect against this tendency. Assuring rest time for both members of the team, resisting the temptation to think of oneself as a line officer, and most of all maintaining an active prayer life will help to keep the unit ministry team spiritually fit and focused on the purpose for which they were placed in the unit.

Finally, in anticipation of training at the National Training Center, the Unit Ministry Team will be best prepared if it expects a

learning experience. An NTC rotation offers a combat unit an experience which approximates combat, and the chance to reflect on the event, and the opportunity to learn and change and grow in tactical effectiveness as required.

An NTC rotation offers precisely the same opportunity to the Unit Ministry Team. In order to take full advantage of that experience the team should remain fully engaged in the event to the greatest degree possible. The team should also use this precious training time to reflect and examine themselves and their roles in this unique service. How will the team respond to battle fatigue casualties, service a dispersed unit, acquire battle field mobility, and refine the team members' roles in the event of real world deployment? For those team members involved in an initial enlistment or obligated tour of active duty, an NTC rotation also offers the opportunity to reflect on whether or not they can serve their God in a military setting while keeping personal and religious integrity.

In short, preparation for ministry at the National Training Center is much like preparation for ministry in any other field training exercise. It is the responsibility of the Unit Ministry Team to consider: the unit's needs, environmental and other limitations, the demands of the chaplain's faith group, soldier skills, questions of meaning and purpose, logistical support, spirituality, and the personal and professional relations of the team members to each other. If the team members can successfully address and balance these concerns, God, the nation, the Army and the individual soldier will have been adequately and appropriately served.



## **Surviving In Combat**

### **Lessons Of The National Training Center**

**Chaplain (CPT) Carl E. Leiner**

It was a quiet early morning, but already the sun was shining brightly in the clear blue skies. The air was clean and crisp with only an occasional gust blowing its puff of dust across the desert floor. As I stretched and opened my eyes, a thought formed in the back of my mind like a light dimly blinking in the distance. Something is not right. As I stood up to dress, I glanced at my watch. It was just past 0600 hours. Strange, no wake up call, no stand to. With only a medic truck beside us, my driver and I were alone in the desert.

After quickly checking our provisions, some of our anxieties were relieved. We had enough water to get through at least one day in the hot August sun. Although we couldn't use it, because of radio silence in the mornings before the mission, we had a radio. We would have to wait until at least the beginning of the battle before we could call for help. The blinking warning light in the back of my mind seemed a bit brighter and nearer now. In spite of the beautiful morning, there was something eerie and strange in the air. Just yesterday, the rear differential of the jeep locked up and left us stranded until the mechanics came by and towed us to the UMCP. The mechanics had worked to repair it until midnight and then knocked off to get some sleep. They planned to finish the job this morning. But now they were gone, all of them, field trains and the combat trains. A few medics, the medics' 113, my jeep, my driver, and I were all that was left in this place. We had been left behind.



Chaplain Leiner, a Southern Baptist, is presently assigned to the 1/8 Cavalry, Second Brigade, First Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. He graduated from the University of Maryland in 1980 and from the Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans in 1982. Before coming on active duty in May of 1985, Chaplain Leiner served a pastorate in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

After the initial anxiety had subsided, we settled down and decided to make the best of the day.

“Anybody got an MRE?” I asked. “Sure chap,” one of the medics came back. “Here you go, sir.” Diced beef with spice sauce. For breakfast? Oh well, drive on! Not long after I had worked through my brown bag of spiced beef and brown sauce, I began to hear artillery. “That is probably why they moved,” I mumbled to myself. This location is too close to the battle, so they moved down the road to a safer location. As the artillery kicked off, that light in the back of my mind was getting brighter and nearer yet. Then came the smoke - no, gas! We masked, and there we sat. In a moment all was quiet as quickly as it had begun. Silence. Was that it? Then almost as if I were imagining it all, I heard a low roar. As the roar grew louder, so did my heartbeat. The blinking light was in front of my face.

First a large cloud of smoke. Then poking through this strange cloud were M1's in high speed - backing toward us and firing at the Soviet tanks chasing right behind. All this was happening a scant 100 yards away! As quickly as it came, the battle passed by us, and reality hit us: we were *behind* enemy lines!

Realistic training - that's what the National Training Center (NTC) is all about. The above story is true, and it happened to me. The anecdote points out the dangers of the combat environment and illustrates only one of the situations in which the Unit Ministry Team can find itself without notice. The modern battlefield is fast-paced and fluid. Perhaps nowhere else can soldiers train as realistically as at the NTC. The rigors of terrain, weather, mission and time give the rotational unit a torturous workout for its equipment, organization, and personnel. In a macabre sense, “It's the next best thing to being there.” Although in the force-on-force segment, there is no “throwing metal downrange,” the MILES system realistically simulates the lethality of the contemporary conventional battlefield and drives home the realistic and pervasive vulnerability. The soldier and the equipment is always — anytime, anyplace — a target for the enemy's weaponry.

For chaplains this is an especially important place for learning. For those of us who have never experienced combat, it's hard to know how we might react to the carnage of the battle or deal with our special vulnerability as non-combatants. Personally, before the NTC rotation I had not thought about it that much. There was no reason to think about it, and there was no frame of reference within which to base such thoughts. Deep down, I guess, I thought that I wouldn't ever have to worry about it.

That changed when I suited up in my own MILES equipment. Suddenly, I was a combat chaplain, and I was a target. Sitting in an open jeep, I was vulnerable to all those instruments of death that the

enemy has — and a non-combattant, too! Sure there are no real bullets at NTC during force-on-force, and it's not the *same* as combat, but the NTC rotation can be a tremendous learning and growing experience for those who may, God forbid, see combat in the future.

I sense that at some point in training, as perhaps in real combat, when all the reasons for fighting seem distant, the paramount issue for the soldier is survival - going home alive and in one piece. Going back to mama, or to wife, or to the child that was born while he was away, becomes the soldier's most important concern. Although not always clearly stated, an important issue for good combat training is how to survive. We, as a nation and as an army, have always tried to avoid taking unnecessary risks with human lives. We cherish life, and we are slow to gamble with people. Consequently, we always strive to minimize risk while providing the most realistic training possible. After all, realistic training is the best training.

For the first term chaplain, or those who have not been to the National Training Center, the thought of going there may cause some personal questioning: "Where does the chaplain fit in?" "Am I needed?" or perhaps most important of all, "What do I need to take with me?"

These ideas which follow are simply personal observations made from my having been to the National Training Center as chaplain to an M1 equipped armored cavalry battalion. They are meant to be practical helps for success and survival. Most of the items here would be applicable across the spectrum of units; however, support units will probably want to adapt some of the following to meet their own unique needs and missions.

One basic idea is essential. The chaplain must always think, "This is real. This is how it's going to be in combat." The garrison mentality is for the garrison, and it must be left in garrison. The NTC is no place for the "garrison FTX syndrome."

*Basic soldier skills.* It may sound harsh, but if the chaplain can't function as a soldier on the battlefield, the chaplain will die the civilian that the chaplain really is. The chaplain, like the chaplain assistant, needs to have basic soldier skills included in training. Among the most crucial of these soldier skills are cover and concealment; survival, escape, and evasion; map reading; NBC training; and radio procedures. These are the fundamentals of the field. One good way to acquire these skills is to learn them with the troops.

*Travel light.* On the modern battlefield where tanks are moving across open terrain at interstate highway speeds, the ability to move, to move quickly, and to move at a moment's notice is a premium



asset. Consequently, at least for combat units, the old idea of a GP small tent with cots, cook stoves, portable TV's, ice chests and all of the rest of the "comforts of home" are inappropriate liabilities. When movement orders come down, you and your assistant or driver must move. Everyone else will be scurrying about with their own duties. If two shelter halves are not adequate, consider a hex tent for inclement weather. Hex tents offer maximum room, and one person can erect or knock one down in less than fifteen minutes. Don't take 20 sets of BDU's. Take a minimum amount (no more than 6 sets). You are going to get dirty; accept the fact. Most rotating units to the NTC should have a field laundry system. Do take enough socks and underwear for daily changes between laundry cycles. If you have a jeep, try to make all that you need fit into it. Leave the trailer at home.

*PMCS, PMCS, PMCS.* PMCS cannot be overstressed. If you have a vehicle, make it your assistant's first priority. The NTC terrain is torturous to all vehicles, and those with little or no preventative maintenance are the first to break down. Without adequate and reliable transportation, you are likely to find yourself behind enemy lines or at very least hitchhiking for the much of the field problem.

*Required reading.* Listed below are the basic reading materials to survive and to be effective in the combat environment. These are chapters in the "Soldier's Bible." We do well not only to read them, but to use them when we go to the field.

FM 16-5	The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations
FM 21-11	First Aid for Soldiers
FM 21-26	Map Reading
FM 21-76	Survival, Evasion, and Escape
FM 90-3	Desert Operations
FM 100-2-1	The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics

*Acquisition list.* In addition to standard TA-50 items, and one set of civilian clothing for emergency purposes, the following items should be obtained prior to deployment:

Vehicle	Sunscreen
Driver (71M or SD)	Eye drops
MRE's	TB MED 507 Snake Bite Kits
Dog tags	Extra canteen
Tent/shelter	Foot powder
Camouflage netting	Religious materials
Compass	Scriptures
Flashlight	Tracts and cassettes
Binoculars	Medals

Ear plugs  
Goggles  
Green bandana  
Maps  
Chapstick  
Chaplain kit  
Two (5 gal) water coolers  
Memorial service  
FM Radio

Rosaries  
Communion supplies  
Paperbacks  
Comics  
Trash bags  
Stamps and post cards  
Emergency leave forms  
Chem lights

*Concerns.* In addition to survival on the battlefield there are concerns regarding our mission as chaplains which need also to be addressed prior to deployment. Among some of the major ones are the following:

Scheduling and conducting services (OPORD)  
Impromptu devotional services  
Chaplain presence (positioning & assignment)  
Hospital coverage (S1 and Chaplain)  
Checking ID tags and casualties (casualty system)  
PMCS  
MILES training  
NBC training  
Helicopter support  
Chaplain communication  
Garrison restrictions  
Catholic and Jewish coverage  
Red Cross and emergency leave procedures  
Coverage of slice and task force attachments  
Morale support activities (Dust Bowl periods)

The individual chaplain will need to fine tune these broad concerns to meet the needs of the unit. These helps, as with all the suggestions in this article, are meant to provide the chaplain with a sense of confidence on the battlefield, to prepare the chaplain for combat ministry, and to contribute to the chaplain and the unit's safe return home to family and friends.

## The Unit Ministry Team At The National Training Center

Chaplain (CPT) John H. Bjarnason, Jr.

SP4 Elliott N. Marks

A new buzzword in the Army chaplaincy is Unit Ministry Team (UMT).<sup>1</sup> Many in the Army chaplaincy regard this new buzzword as the salvation of the chaplaincy and some as the salvation of the chaplain assistant. Others in the Army chaplaincy are trying hard to ignore this new term, recalling silently, and sometimes verbally, past experiences with chaplains or chaplains assistants which turned sour.

The writers of this article have been a Unit Ministry Team, in the fullest sense of the term for the past two years. We have thoroughly enjoyed the team ministry with one another during our



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Specialist Marks has been in the Army as a Chaplain Assistant for three years. For the last two years he has served in the 197 Infantry Brigade (Mechanized), Fort Benning, Georgia. He is currently being transferred to a new assignment in West Germany. Specialist Marks is a Lay Eucharistic Minister in the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>1</sup> Unit Ministry Team (UMT) is defined in Army Literature in FM 16-5 and FM 16-6. It consists of the chaplain, a noncombatant, and the Chaplain Assistant, a military combatant. Together they form a ministry team forward, near the battle front. Usually the UMT is for the Task Force size unit.



time together. As we look back on the two years together, we realize that the foundation for our Unit Ministry Team has been prayer. We have prayed together and prayed for each other; and most importantly, we have prayed together for the units and soldiers we have served.

During the last two years, we have deployed for the numerous week-long field exercises; three ARTEP's for our battalions, "REFORGER 85," and three rotations to the National Training Center (NTC).<sup>2</sup> This article addresses our NTC rotations and the opportunities for the UMT in the desert at Fort Irwin.

In addition to the foundation of prayer, we think several ingredients go into the making of a successful Unit Ministry Team:

- Emotional maturity of both partners: When the chaplain or the assistant, or both, come to the UMT not fully mature, they are not ready to give or to minister to others.

- Clarity of purpose: When one or both ministry partners does not know the purpose of ministry, they are unable to plan, execute, or review deployment as a UMT.

- Experience: Although experience can be over-rated, it is useful to know why and how something is to be accomplish and for judging the success and relative importance of the various activities of ministry.

- Persons of faith: Without both partners of the UMT having a deep and abiding faith in God, there is neither ministry nor team.

- Ready, willing, and able to do hard work for sustained periods of time: *Both* partners must be fully capable of long and hard hours of genuine work.

We have found these five items to be essential ingredients in the success in ministry that we have experienced in the field exercises at the National Training Center.

## **The Unit Before NTC**

The most important part of a successful National Training Center rotation is preparation for the deployment period. For us this has involved spiritual preparation, physical preparation, and military preparation.

### **A SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR NTC:**

1. Our UMT has done prayer and fasting during the preparation period and during the review of the NTC rotation. These are

<sup>2</sup> National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California. The NTC charter directs them to train the Battalion Task Force in force-on-force and in live fire. This training is the closest thing to real combat possible giving our safety requirements in peace time. An NTC rotation is from three to four weeks long.

spiritual exercises for spiritual success. When we are surrounded by so much worldly power, it is important not to forget the heavenly.

2. Spiritual goals evolve from our prayer and fasting, meditation, and communion. We have found it important to write these spiritual goals down so that we will have some guide to measure the effect of our ministry.

3. There must be family preparation. Family preparation is not just for the married person of the UMT. The unmarried also come out of a support system of some sort. To put this another way, those with whom we feel some important connection — family or friends — are included in our preparation for a successful UMT at NTC.

4. Finally, we have found that our personal and financial affairs must be in very good order for our Unit Ministry Team to have a successful rotation at the National Training Center.

Spiritual preparation is never complete. Even during deployment, we fill our cup, so to speak, with daily devotion and scripture reading. We have discovered that without something to give from our cup, ministry becomes a hollow word.

## **PHYSICAL PREPARATION FOR NTC**

We have mentioned already that for a successful Unit Ministry Team, both partners must be ready, willing, and able to do long, hard work. A successful ministry in the desert of the National Training Center requires robust health and youthful vigor.

We consider the following areas of physical preparation for the UMT to be very important:

1. Be physically fit. We participate in all Army physical training activities and go beyond to do personal physical training activities on our own. We have found that nothing less than tip-top shape will sustain us through the rigors of the UMT rotation at the NTC.

2. Just as our bodies must be in top physical shape, so our vehicle must be in top mechanical shape. The UMT stuck in a broken vehicle is not doing ministry; and without good daily maintenance on the vehicle, the UMT can expect mechanical problems. A weekly visit by the chaplain to the motor pool is not sufficient.

3. We practice basic soldier skills long before deployment. For soldiering and ministry at the National Training Center, map reading, sanitation of living areas, and obedience to military supervisors are the most important.

4. Knowing and practicing the UMT unit SOP.

It is very easy to get lost at Fort Irwin. If the team is lost because of poor map skills, no ministry. The desert of Fort Irwin can be an incredibly dusty place. The ministry of the team can be impaired by something as common as the dirt itself. The greatest UMT, which

does not keep its supervisors informed (chaplains and commanders), and full of good will toward their ministry will find themselves outsiders, and not full partners in their NTC rotation. The more experience the UMT has with the military SOP, both garrison and field, the better the UMT will be able conform to it, and have a full, successful NTC rotation.

## **Military Preparation for NTC**

We have learned from experience that not only is spiritual and physical preparation required by the UMT, but equally important is military preparation for success during an NTC rotation.

We have found our relationship to the other members of the command to be very important. The chaplain assistant must know his NCO chain of command and be able to approach superiors easily for items of information and for the other needs of the UMT. In the same way, the chaplain must be a friend to the commander, willing to care and to pray for and with him. Moreover, the chaplain must visit with the four primary staff officers and develop a mutually responsive relationship with them and their sections.

We recommend that a special note book be kept by both members of the UMT beginning about a week before the exercise. They are useful as a check list during the preparation phase and serve as a source of data for After Action Reports. We keep the following items in ours.

- Calendar of major events of rotation.
- Lessons learned
- Packing list for UMT gear and personal gear
- List as rotation goes along of what you did not need and what you wish you had brought.
- Deployment and redeployment, times for units, and UMT.

## **The UMT During NTC**

We have discussed at some length the preparations required by the Unit Ministry Team before deployment to the National Training Center. We wish to now review opportunities for ministry as we have known them. The following sample of opportunities to ministry by the UMT during deployment at the NTC is meant to be suggestive of how the UMT might expand its service to soldiers.

1. We distribute Bibles and other appropriate religious literature at the airport as the soldiers are mustered for the flight manifest. The Brigade chaplain divides up the flights and the chaplain and his assistant pass out the religious literature. This is not hard. It is a lot of fun. A smile, a kind word, a hand shake or pat on the back, goes a long way to signal to soldiers that the UMT cares for them.



2. Soldiers and groups of soldiers often ask for a chaplain's prayer before the flight. It's a time for ministry, to pray with and for soldiers as they prepare for the flight which deploys them to the NTC.

3. The UMT visits soldiers on the airplane. Sometimes there are lengthy visits. More often, they are short simple, "Hellos" and "Safe flights".

4. The provision of field services by the UMT during the preparation phase and the Dust Bowl<sup>3</sup> of the NTC can be effective at company size or task force size or brigade size. Keys to success are: (a) Coordination with command and fellow chaplains. (b) Good, clear communication to Company Commanders and First Sergeants about type, time, location and purpose of service. (c) Timing is critical for all field services. It is often difficult to find times that do not conflict with major unit military activities.

5. There are many and varied opportunities for the UMT to serve others in the Dust Bowl. A Good UMT in the Dust Bowl feels like a fox in the chicken pen. There are so many opportunities for ministry before the UMT, it is hard to know what to do first.

6. The last day in the Dust Bowl is dedicated to the preparation for movement to the field, which always occurs at night. Here is a unique opportunity to minister. Our UMT has found great success walking from vehicle to vehicle while the soldiers are on line waiting for darkness and the order to begin the movement. This is usually a brief moment: Hi, how are you? Did you get enough rest? Are you ready for what's to come? God bless you and your field problem. What's your job? Tell me about it. These are brief but powerful moments and they say to the soldier, the chaplain assistant and the chaplain care about you.

7. The next opportunity to minister for the UMT occurs when the UMT arrives at the place where the unit will be located for a few hours a few days. This is a critical point. The location of the UMT should be central. Often we have found it good to be located near the Command Post, the Tactical Operations Center, or the mess hall.

8. We have found it useful to make our first visits in the field at NTC to the Task Force Commander, Company Commanders and First Sergeants, key staff officers, maintenance sections, perimeter guards, staff section work areas, and to make a walk-through of the company size platoon and section size areas of occupation. (We

<sup>3</sup> Dust Bowl is the place where the deployed unit first come at the NTC. It got its name because at certain times of the year or times during the day, it is very dusty, and because it is surrounded on three sides by mountains.

stated under spiritual preparation for NTC that the UMT would have written goals. One of the goals that we have found helpful is to visit every area every third day.)

9. The UMT travels from place to place in the field. Unless we are in a big hurry, we never pass a stopped vehicle. We stop, inquire about being of assistance, and offer them a Gidon's pocket New Testament. This is an example of what we call taking "Targets of Opportunity."<sup>4</sup>

10. The UMT has an opportunity to ministry at Staff Meetings. This UMT is often asked to begin or end Staff Meeting with a prayer. We use the following outline for briefing the Commander and Staff:

1. Moral of command
2. UMT's activities for the day (or period)
3. Religious Services
  - a. Completed
  - b. Upcoming
4. Unique concerns
5. Spiritual thought to conclude.

11. We hold many religious services in the field. Because the Chaplain Assistant is a Lay Eucharist Minister (LEM), religious services consist of a general Protestant field service, and for the Catholics the distribution of the consecrated hosts of the Eucharist.<sup>5</sup>

12. At the National Training Center there is a small Army hospital. A visit by the chaplain from the unit is very much appreciated. Ministry here takes many forms: Sacraments, messages, prayers, coordination with the unit, etc.

13. The success of the ministry of Unit Ministry Team at Fort Irwin depends in many ways on the cooperation of the post chaplain at Fort Irwin. We recommend at least a courtesy call on the

<sup>4</sup>Targets of Opportunities (TOA), This UMT wishes to thank CH (LTC) Jim White, the Fort Irwin Installation Chaplain for the development of the concept of TOA taken from the military concept and used in the ministry concept. Here are examples of targets of opportunity.

1. Waiting for movement of convoy.
2. Vehicles stopped or broken down.
3. Chow lines, eating around mess hall or group of soldiers eating MRE's.
4. Set rest periods (Ministry is some what difficult during the actual movements, set up and breakdown times.) It is a good idea for the UMT to be doing what other soldiers are doing.

<sup>5</sup> Lay Eucharist Ministers (LEM) a Roman Catholic Layman designated to assist the priest in the distribution of the Eucharist, or to administer the Eucharist in the absence of the priest.

Installation Chaplain at Fort Irwin. This can initially be done before deployment, via phone call and letter.

14. To conclude this numerical listing of opportunities to serve soldiers, we want to mention some ways that we measure our effectiveness. At the NTC, we look for "Indicators of Effectiveness." Some of these are how the UMT is received when bad weather occurs, when it's chow time, when the UMT's vehicle brakes down, and the acceptance of the UMT by other soldiers.

## **After NTC and Conclusion**

If the UMT has prepared well and executed the deployment well, the "after NTC activities" are the easiest part. While vehicles, unit and individual soldiers, and their equipment are being restored to a high state of readiness, it is well for the UMT to review notes and experiences at the NTC. The discipline of writing an After Action Report is helpful to the UMT in terms of future rotations and helpful as it is shared with other teams who will come to the National Training Center.

In our three rotations to the National Training Center, we have tried not to simply repeat the same experiences three times, but rather to grow, develop, and learn, in order to make each deployment more profitable, spiritually challenging, more pleasing to God, and more service to the soldier.



## National Training Center Rotation:

### A Journal

Chaplain (CPT) Curtis B. Heydt, Jr.

*Day 1  
Monday*

Left Combat Trains with S-4 officer in order to find a location where we could send and receive communication. As we were leaving the Combat trains, we passed one Soviet T72 and two BMP's that had pulled into the combat trains and decimated them. They didn't attack us even though we passed right by them. (If they had attacked us, they would have given up the surprise in the attack.) We pulled off the road and watched the decimation.

*Day 2  
Tuesday*

Visited D team and A team. It took most of the day to get from tank to tank and from implement to implement. I was able to pass out peanuts to D team and comics to D and A teams. Its been a good day for the Unit Ministry Team.

AAR this evening: Chaplain Section received an "excellent" critique! It was not only encouraging, but it made a positive impression on the rest of the officers present.



Chaplain Heydt is currently the battalion chaplain for the 1st Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Fort Stewart, Georgia. In his previous assignment to the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor of the 24th Infantry Division, he served in two deployments for desert training to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

*Day 3*  
*Wednesday*

I was self loving this morning! I knew I should get out early, but stayed in the sack.

Around noon we were hit by an artillery barrage which included a non-persistent nerve agent. I felt totally inadequate to the situation. But nonetheless, I was able to direct soldiers and to minister to the wounded as well. Learned I must be more tactical minded and must be harder on myself.

On this day I learned two lessons: I must be more tactical minded, and I must be harder on myself.

Realizing that we might be next, we turned off the road and dropped into a deep wadi. The OPFOR returned to their previous position, and this time reinforced. Our wadi was encircled by T72's and BMP's, but they were facing away from us. We could see them (could have hit them with a stone) but their backs were to us. Finally, one of the loaders on one of the BMP's turned around and saw us. Realizing we needed to get out, we attempted to move but the 1/4 ton wouldn't start. Our driver began to roll down the wadi in order to start the engine, while two BMP's began the pursuit.

Because I had been up on the ridge observing the OPFOR position, I found myself running behind the jeep trying to jump in. When the jeep finally started, we booked — with two BMPs in pursuit. Moving down the road and around a bend, we passed two engineers which were going toward the BMP's. We had been saved by two unsuspecting crews, who were about to face two hungry BMP's.

Rounding another bend we came upon our battalion commander. We quickly signaled him to turn around and to seek cover with us.

126 people treated:

84 wounded in action (WIAs)

48 killed in action (KIAs)

*Day 4*  
*Thursday*

Busy day! Up at 0330 and around 0430 we had another non-persistent nerve agent attack. All my practice yesterday with the M256 kit paid off. I was Johnny-on-the-spot. Jumped forward with the forward Med truck in order to be where the brunt of the casualties would be coming in.

It was a non-stop day! I visited with the casualties until about 1500, when I visited "C" Co. As it turned out, it was a Log Pac Train. I

had my jeep parked next to the station with my subdued chaplain flag flying. As the tanks come up on line tactically, I waited and boarded the tank waiting to be the next fed. (This offered personnel time without the distraction of food being passed.)

It was a good day and good time spent with the troops.

*Day 5*  
*Friday*

Need to talk about Ron my assistant. He has been a real asset to the Unit Ministry Team. Ron has a committed Christian heart, good attitude toward working, and accepts responsibility easily. He has a desire to learn, and he is open to receive instruction and direction. He's a good man.

*Day 6*  
*Saturday*

Yesterday I was afforded the honor of attending a tactical AAR. Learned a lot about the experiences and pressures and strategies of the CO's and other combat officers.

Last night it became very windy and unpleasant. I am going to try to get back to the BSA tomorrow to visit our field trains and contact our brigade chaplain to coordinate Catholic coverage.

*Day 7*  
*Sunday*

Tried to set up services, but there isn't enough time to coordinate. In the afternoon I trooped the dug-in company line of B team. At each position, I talked with the men and said a prayer.

*Day 8*  
*Monday*

When I woke up this morning around 0400, it was lightly sprinkling. By 0600 it was snowing large flakes. By 0800 it looked like a winter wonderland.

Problem: This morning most of my clothes got wet. Now I am cold and wet.

Went over to our second AAR and got rave reviews. "Exceptional duty performance by Chaplain!"

Had hoped to get back to the field trains. When I arrived back at Combat Trains from AAR, found out the OPFOR had broken through the 101st line. We were forced to relocate.



Night is settling in. The snow is gone, but the dampness remains. Have been able to dry out most of my equipment and clothes. This could still be an uncomfortable night.

*Day 9*  
*Tuesday*

What a day! Around 0500 we were gassed. The OC's threw one canister about 20 feet behind my jeep. Ron was on guard duty; I was alone. Dressed, but not in my gear. I had to run for my protective mask. Getting a small gulp of CS, I was not able to get a large breath of fresh air before having to get my mask on. Fumbling for my mask, I panicked. (Could I hold long enough to get my mask on or would I be forced to take a gulp of air and then inhale CS?) Groping for my mask, (I was enveloped in a cloud of CS) I found it stuck. It would not come out of the holder. When I finally got it out, the cords were tangled. My breath was running out! Would I throw up in my mask? After what seemed a lifetime, I finally got my mask on. Immediately I felt a warm feeling of safety come over me. Breathing hard inside my mask, my stomach churned from the CS. Eventually I got my gloves and boots on.

About an hour later while our Combat trains were preparing to relocate, I saw a BMP rushing to crest the hill on our N.E. side. Knowing that more were following him, I yelled to Ron, "Get us out of here." The S-4 (who I was talking to at the time) ran for his jeep.

Rushing from the combat train position, followed by S-4 and Med Plt Lt, we narrowly escaped the fate of our comrades in the combat trains. They were being destroyed by the Soviet BMPs and T72's. It was a fast decision I had to make: Stay with my fellow soldiers and most certainly be killed (we had no fire power to fight such an adversary). 2. Escape as fast as possible and alert our comrades while doing so. I chose to leave.

Booking at a high rate of speed, I took to safety around a bend and behind a nearby hill. Climbing to the top with my binoculars, I focused on what I could see of the combat trains. In a short while I could see several more vehicles moving out, pursued by an OPFOR vehicle. Rushing down the hill I yelled to the other two jeeps to tell them the OPFOR was coming. Immediately each one of us seemed to take off in opposite directions. Using the valleys and wadis for movement, and cresting the ridges only when necessary. From then on it was "escape and evasion."

It appeared that several BMP's were combing the area. My strategy was always to try to keep one or two ridges ahead of them. After several narrow escapes, eventually the BMP's turned their attention in

another direction. My next strategy was to try to work my way back to the combat trains to see if there were any survivors and to link up with some of our troops. This strategy was cast aside when we miraculously missed being killed by a T72 that fired a round at us from one click away. My mission was now merely to survive.

Using the valleys and wadis again, we crested only when it was the only way to move to a safer distance from the OPFOR. Suddenly we found ourselves flanked by three OPFOR missile launchers (SZUs).

Once again booking at a high rate of speed in the direction that allowed only a rear shot, we travelled some distance when our OC caught up with us and told us the entire area was considered overrun. We were to return to our Combat Trains. We were to be considered survivors!

Upon returning we found that the three jeeps that took off together, were the only survivors of an OPFOR regimental overrun. The Unit Ministry Team held its own!

*Day 10*  
*Wednesday*

We are off and running again. After a freezing night, we road marched directly behind our advancing armor column to execute a passage through lines of the 101st Airborne. As we approached the front line we were boomed several times by enemy aircraft. We lost some combat train troops and vehicles. I had a near-miss, and Ron was wounded. Of course we had to go to MOPP 4 several times and use the M256 kit and unmasking procedures. I am beginning to feel like a pro in this area.

Although we (Combat Trains) are reacting better in adverse conditions, we are still not working as a unit but as separate sections—each with minimal coordination and support for each other. This is definitely a problem that would hurt us in an actual combat situation.

Around 1200 we assumed a position and set up our station in an area fairly close to the fighting. Soon about five BMP's and five T72's rushed past us to a position and opened fire on our armor units. This was about 200 meters away from us. They then turned around and opened fire on us. Ron and I dismounted from the jeep and lay on the ground. With only one M16 there was little we could do in return. But I did have Ron take aim and fire at the last TC in the column. He missed, but gave it a valiant effort.

Got in an argument with the S4 NCOIC about the placement of an observation point in order to forwarn us of any approaching OPFOR advancing down any of the roads that flanked us. It wasn't a nice

scene. I should have had the S4 officer in charge give the orders. One of my dangerous faults is the need to take charge. I must remember: I am a Chaplain!

Sent a message to the 2nd Bde Chaplain over our RATT rig regarding Catholic coverage for tomorrow.

*Day 11*  
*Thursday*

Somehow I made it through the entire force-on-force without being killed or wounded. Today is down time. They even let us sleep late this morning!

Learned a lot today about setting up religious support coverage. I felt proud of myself for being able to contact my 2nd Bde Chaplain and Catholic priest from Ft. Stewart, Georgia.

Chaplain Norton, our priest, and I came back and set up a Catholic Mass for 1500. No one came because everyone was at the ammo point. We should have held it there instead. Our priest helped me to see how to get CO's involved. Put the ball in their court. Be sure to say things like, "When do you want YOUR service"? Help them to see that you are there to assist THEIR religious program.

This morning I held prayer services for the battalion directly following the "Live Fire" briefing and twelve men attended.

*Day 12*  
*Friday*

Left at 0630 to once again pick up our Catholic priest. Services will be at 0800. As it turned out only 6 men out of our battalion attended. Somewhat disheartening. I have enjoyed my time with our Catholic priest. His experiences and maturity are great assets for him. I learned a great deal just being around him. He has a great way with soldiers. He is their friend and chaplain. He is one of them and yet maintains the dignity of his rank.

This morning it dawned on me that if I get on the quartering party going ahead of the task force we will avoid several things: travel by night, travel in cold weather, and the longer road march of a larger company. I made adjustment to get on it.

I have used the road time throughout our stay here for prayer time. Endless hours of boredom lead the mind to wondering in areas that are spiritually dangerous to me. Consequently this rotation has offered me more time with my Lord than I usually find. It has been a good experience. Thoughts: Must talk to Bn Cdr when we get



back. He must speak directly to his Co Cdr's about supporting HIS religious program.

*Day 13*  
*Saturday*

After the first live fire battle, Ron and I went forward and once again "trooped" the lines. We were able to talk with and hand out cookies to men of A team, C Team, and the mortar. It was enjoyable experience and the men seemed to enjoy the friendly attention.

We had another AAR today. It was less formal and not in the van. Afterwards the senior OC came over to me and expressed how excited he was by the ministry of presence he had seen in our two task forces.

He observed that the task force that has active chaplains seems to take better care of its men. It was very encouraging to hear the chaplain's ministry makes a difference in the overall performance. Maj. C. also commented that when he visits the troops and asks how things are going, if the chaplain has been around, the soldiers mention it as a positive experience.

We have made it through two live fire's without any casualties. Our prayers have been answered.

*Day 14*  
*Sunday*

Its early afternoon and our last day in the field has been quite a let down. I had hoped for a climatic finish, but it has been a day of road marching from one location to the next with nothing much to do between jumps.

We are going in and I am going to miss the rough splendor of this unique land. The National Training Center is different from anything I have ever experienced before.

Thank you, Lord, for letting me come out here twice.

At 1630 the war ended . . .

## Desert Ministry

**Chaplain (CPT) James E. Agnew**

**My flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. (*Psalms* 63:1)**

Heat, cold, dust, wind, sand, rocks, and soldiers . . . all these ingredients work together to provide the perfect setting for meaningful soldiering and ministry at the National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin, California.

As the 1-77 Armor Task Force began preparations for the rotation to the National Training Center, visions of desert life ran again and again through my head. The war stories of the NTC veterans easily captured my anxious attention — a rookie chaplain beginning to anticipate the closest thing to real combat he had known. With the stories, the briefings, the in-process reviews, photographs, and even videos of the NTC, I began to piece together the puzzle of what life at the NTC would be like. Of course, all these bits of information couldn't fully equip me for the event itself, but each spoke of an important area of soldiering and ministry.

The preparation process for the NTC involved a myriad of things. The Unit Ministry Team (UMT) needed to be spiritually, emotionally, and physically ready to fully utilize the opportunities for ministry. Only through much prayer and solid ground work, could effective ministry at the NTC become a reality. A knowledge of the unit mission, and an appreciation for practical soldier needs provided the essential framework for the religious support plan which we developed for the unit. A thorough knowledge of FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operation*, was basic. Additional information gathered through in-process reviews, after-



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action reports of other units, and coordination directly with the NTC assisted in the orientation of the UMT and its preparation.

From the logistical perspective, perhaps the most critical need was for a vehicle. There must be a vehicle designated solely for the use of the Unit Ministry Team — the chaplain and the assistant. Having a vehicle in good operating condition, with a radio for secure communication, would enabled the UMT to support the entire task force. A map and compass were perhaps the second most basic requirements. Bibles, religious symbols, and literature in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of soldiers were necessary. Under the stressful conditions of the NTC, soldiers requested these items more than usual. Refreshments provided to soldiers were well received and much appreciated. The chaplain cares for the physical as well as the spiritual needs of soldiers, and that means a lot to the troops.

Once the UMT was prepared and equipped, opportunities for ministry began. In the pre-deployment stage, family separation briefings, counseling, and prayer for a safe rotation were the building blocks for ministry. Family members were informed and prepared for the deployment, and this effort reduced much of the separation anxiety and stress. Information, understanding, and support characterized this important ministry of presence.

When the units of the task force arrived at the National Training Center, the soldiers felt the seriousness of the mission in a new way. The atmosphere was tense, yet exciting as soldiers anticipated what they had to accomplish. “WIN AT NTC!” “Win at NTC!” The phrase was heard over and over again. But winning at the NTC was no easy achievement. The task force had to beat a much larger opposing force on the enemy’s home turf. Battlefield butterflies fluttered in more than a few stomachs. The pressure to win, the anxiety of force-on-force, and the concern about live-fire combat were enough for some soldiers to sincerely seek the consolation of ministry. A hostile environment, little sleep, and exhaustion from constant moving, caused real-life ministry needs.

The environment at the NTC was hostile; freezing nights and sweaty, hot days. Dust and sand covered everything and penetrated everything. Eating dust during road marches left more than a bad taste in one’s mouth. The lack of showers and latrine facilities didn’t help morale. Although the desert life-style had been anticipated, the actual experience couldn’t fully be imagined.

Loneliness and thoughts of home prompted requests for prayer. From family problems to the loss of a loved one, prayer and counsel helped the soldiers through. The encouraging and reassuring presence of the chaplain, forward with the men, reduced the high level of anxiety among the soldiers. Some soldiers were “killed” or “wounded” several times during the exercise. “What if this was for real?” The shrill noise emitted by the MILES equipment when a



person was “shot” was enough for anyone to have second thoughts about his mortality.

Some units were overrun or totally wiped out. Numerous soldiers experienced depression and a feeling of uselessness. There seemed to be no end to the mass casualties and the long lines in the reconstitution process. They wanted to win, their attempts seemed futile. Most soldiers were not aware of how well the task force performed. They needed to know the importance of the role they played in the overall result of the battle. The chain of command did not always get the word out. The chaplain, by keeping abreast of the tactical situation and results of the battles, provided positive feedback to the soldiers, lifting their morale.

In a field exercise of this magnitude real world injuries also occurred. Whether in the field, the battalion aid station, or at the hospital, the chaplain’s presence meant a lot to the injured soldier. When a soldier was evacuated to a strange hospital, surrounded by people he didn’t know, it was encouraging to see a familiar face and comforting to have someone with whom to talk and pray.

Field worship services designed to accommodate the tactical situation proved to be very beneficial. Spending a couple of weeks in the desert day and night provided plenty of time to think of God. Men needed the assurance that although they seemed alone, the Lord was with them. Worship services allowed soldiers to release their feelings and prayers. Words of encouragement from the Scriptures lifted many burdens and brought peace.

The live-fire probably produced the most distress among the soldiers. When the control officers requested the presence of the physician’s assistant and chaplain in the control bunker, it confirmed a genuine concern. The possibility of a runaway machine gun or a short artillery round posed more than a theoretical danger. Anxiety about live fire led many to request prayer for safety; and fear of being injured, shot, or captured caused soldiers to do some soul-searching.

During live fire, the support of the UMT was vital. Ministry during live fire included conducting worship services and administering communion on the evening before, walking the lines during the preparation phase, and providing the soldiers with feedback, literature, and refreshments afterwards. Smiles lit up the dirty, sandy faces of many men when they were shown love and concern.

The soldiers’ pace for the exercise was extremely demanding. After two intense days of live fire, the task force immediately moved to the ammunition down load point and then to the assembly area for the next mission. A 20 km road march at night, was followed by several hours of unloading ammunition, and another 20 km road march. Many of the tactical vehicle drivers and commanders had to stay awake all night in order to accomplish the mission. With

many soldiers at the point of exhaustion, and with no opportunity for recovery, the role of the UMT became extremely important. As a practical ministry to soldiers in this situation, the UMT provided hot coffee and cocoa during the down loading. Simply staying awake most of the night with the men — listening, laughing, and learning — demonstrated a genuine interest in their safety and welfare.

Ministry at the NTC was one experience that I will never forget. It not only provided meaningful opportunities for ministry, but also laid a foundation of credibility and acceptance with staff and soldiers. Several men dedicated or rededicated their lives to the Lord. This desert experience, ministry at the National Training Center, as the Psalmist's observation promises, drew this soldier and others closer to God.

## **We Have Souls, Too!**

### **Ministry To The Opposition Forces**

**Chaplain (CPT) Kenneth L. Kerr**

We left the lights of Barstow, California, nearly forty-five minutes ago. Driving across the barren desert terrain only broken by bald mountains, dry lakes, and misplaced mounds of rocks, we wonder if we might have taken a wrong turn. The road we travel seems to lead nowhere. Then we notice a huge rock pile that is strangely different. On these rocks are painted a memorial, a tribute to units that have trained on this seemingly vast wasteland. The bright colors of unit crests bear testimony to soldiers who have simulated actual force-on-force combat at the National Training Center. We climb one more hill; then rounding the crest we see civilization, a lone Military Police Shack. Four more miles down into the valley is the contonement area, the heart of the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.

The National Training Center at Fort Irwin provides FORSCOM maneuver battalions the most realistic combat training possible. The NTC with its 1,000 square miles of training area and state-of-the-art instrumentation has the environment necessary to establish tough, realistic combat conditions as well as the means to objectively measure whether standards are met. Here armor and mechanized infantry task forces engage in actual force-on-force combat on this rugged desert terrain. These Armor and Infantry units come with their M1 or M60 Tanks, M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles or M113 Armored Personnel Carriers, M577 Command Vehicles, ITVs, Attack Helicopters, engineer assets, and A-10 support from the Air



Chaplain Kerr has been assigned to the 1st Battalion, 73rd Armor at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, since November 1984. He is endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, and served as a pastor in Kentucky and Indiana before entering active duty. Chaplain Kerr is a graduate of Westminser Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.



Force. They become the Blue Force and will fight against the permanent party stationed at Fort Irwin known as the OPFOR, short for Opposing Force.

Intensely rugged and realistic battles continue day and night for two weeks as the Blue Force exercises their combat skills in a variety of combat scenarios. No longer do training exercises degenerate into arguments over who shot who first. Realism is simulated by the use of MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement Systems). Transmitters, receivers, radios, cameras, and computers turn this vast desert into a high tech battlefield where excellence in training and combat experience are combined to give soldiers and leaders opportunities for training never before possible. Combat vehicles are carefully monitored on computer terminals and television screens. Computer printouts record weapon systems fired, hits, and near misses. Audiovisual tapes and hard copy printouts of the battles are preserved for future analysis. Observer Controllers, also permanent party at the NTC, are U.S. combat doctrine experts who maneuver with the Blue Force to observe and evaluate the planning, preparation, and execution of the mission. The goal is to provide an accurate assessment for a meaningful evaluation and feedback to training units. The engagements are fiercely fought. With MILES as the honest broker, and the Observer Controllers to see that the rules of engagement are fairly applied, the battles will be "won or lost," soldiers will "live or die," depending on the ability of the entire Task Force to perform in actual combat conditions as they face their NTC opponent, the OPFOR.

Who is this OPFOR who formidably occupy the Southern California desert? Where do they come from? How have they become such an awesome opponent? What is their standard? What is their fighting doctrine? How do they train? What do they believe?

The OPFOR is the enemy. They look and fight like a Soviet Motorized Rifle Regiment. They come in masses, echelon after echelon of T-72s, BMPs, BRDMs, ZSUs, SP122s, SA14s, BTR-60s and dismounted infantry. They must be the toughest and truest opposing force possible to give the Blue Force every opportunity to prepare for a day we pray will never come. But if that day comes, our Army will be better prepared to face the real enemy because they have already faced the OPFOR.

The OPFOR Regiment consists of two battalions permanently assigned to the National Training Center: the 1st Battalion, 73d Armor, and the 6th Battalion, 31st Mechanized Infantry. NTC Support Battalion provides 581st Maintenance and the Electronic Warfare and Reconnaissance company assets that are needed. Usually dismounted infantry and engineer companies are augmented to the OPFOR during rotations to provide a realistic replication of a Soviet Motorized Rifle Regiment. The OPFOR soldiers, however, are

privates, NCOs and officers, similar to any other unit in the United States Army. Many of these soldiers have come right out of Basic and Advanced Individual Training. Many of them have years of experience in tactical units. Some have actual combat experience from the days of Vietnam. Yet the OPFOR soldier is unique in several ways. In addition to maintaining all of the American soldiering skills, he must be proficient in Soviet soldiering skills if he is to provide a realistic opposing force for soldiers who train at the NTC.

While continuing to master his Common Tasks Training and Skills Qualification Training, the OPFOR soldier, shortly after arrival to either the 1/73d Armor Battalion or 6/31st (M) Infantry Battalion, is sent to the OPFOR Academy. There, for eleven days, he is taught the basics of desert survival and Soviet combat doctrine. He learns Soviet regimental fighting formations, how their armored vehicles move in columns and then come on line to attack in echelons, how they arrange their defensive positions, and how to identify and destroy U.S. armored vehicles. Also, in the academy, he receives hands-on training with actual Soviet weapons. The training and testing at the academy helps the graduate to become the most valuable link in the force-on-force combat at the National Training Center, "The OPFOR Soldier."

After completion of the OPFOR Academy, the soldier returns to his company and joins his comrades to fight the Blue Force in the desert on blistering hot summer days and on chilling cold winter nights. Task Force commanders and unit tactics change with every new rotation, but the OPFOR soldier learns with each new experience. Week in and week out the OPFOR soldier becomes more and more familiar with his mission. He learns every square meter of the desert, and this gives him the "home court" advantage. He fights in a Soviet styled Motorized Rifle Battalion offense or defense rotation after rotation, and this gives him the experience advantage. He is forced to maintain his combat vehicle under all conditions and in all circumstances, and he learns how to keep his equipment operational. His logistical support, operational support, administrative support, command and control is also seasoned with OPFOR force-on-force experience. The entire regiment knows their job and performs it well. Fourteen Rotations a year have made them experts at what they do. They know how important it is for them to give the Blue Force both challenging and realistic opposition. They know that the tougher they are, the better training the Blue Force receives. They know this gives them an important role in the strength and effectiveness of our combat arms, the security of our nation, and the defense of freedom and liberty.

But what about the human cost in terms of stress and fatigue? Although the faces of the Blue Force change with each new rotation, the "war" never ends for the OPFOR soldiers. Yesterday they



defended the "Whale", today they attack through the "Valley of Death," tomorrow they defend "Hidden Valley," then they move on to "Airplane Hill," "Nelson Lake," back to "Red Pass," and the "Shelf," on and on, day after day, rotation after rotation. The battles continue. One hundred and ninety-six rotation days a year; plus fourteen preparation days, fourteen deployment days, and twenty-eight recovery days, adds up to two hundred and fifty-two days every year that these soldiers are involved in their OPFOR mission. Add to that the necessary CTT and SQT training days and these soldiers become some of the best tactically trained soldiers in today's Army. Yet this time demand upon the OPFOR can take its toll. Leaders must be careful to monitor stress and fatigue levels of their soldiers. General George C. Marshall once said, "The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end." The importance of the OPFOR mission requires the care of those individuals who complete that mission.

What about the families of the OPFOR soldiers? They must also make sacrifices. Dad is out in the desert fighting the Blue Force more than two hundred days a year. Summer vacation, weekends, holidays have little meaning to the OPFOR families, because the rotations control the calendar. Families learn to survive without dad. High school ballgames, birthday parties, anniversaries, graduations, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, even Easter are not forgotten; they are just like all other days for the OPFOR soldier. Back in the family housing area a little boy asks his mom, "When is daddy coming home?" She can answer with some assurance, "In four more days, dear." But if this were a real war, that daddy may not come home at all. The sacrifices the OPFOR and their families pay are tremendous, but if it makes our nation stronger; and if that is a deterrent to war, then it is worth it. I have been "killed: many times on the MILES battlefield; but at the end of each mission, I can "rekey" and move on the next battle with the OPFOR. This would not happen in real war with real artillery fire and real death! Thank God for realistic, yet relatively safe combat training.

One of the more common needs of the OPFOR soldier is family counseling. Although the amount of time the OPFOR soldier spends in the desert gives him great experience in the performance of his mission, it does not allow him much time off to spend with his family. Day after day, night after night, he is in the tactical combat mode; dug into a defensive position or preparing for a 0600 hours regimental attack. Typically, he gets one three or four day weekend off each month. Maintaining his CTT and SQT skills adds to his time commitments. Soon the OPFOR soldier may become a stranger in his



own house. Counseling with these soldiers and their families can be very rewarding, for often they only need to be reminded to make the most of the time they have together. A little quality time with the family is far superior to poor quantity time. Mutual support is the key to a happy and effective marriage, and a common commitment to both the home and to the God who established the home strengthens that mutual support even when family members cannot be together.

The isolation of Fort Irwin, which is necessary to conduct force-on-force combat and live fire exercises, adds an additional hardship on the married soldiers and their families. On post housing is very limited, and the waiting list for quarters is from six to ten months. No quarters are available for the families of service members through grade E-3. The nearest civilian housing is forty miles away in Barstow, California. This places an additional commuting expense on those soldiers who can least afford it. It also separates their family members from the support systems on post.

Spouses and children spend many, many nights at home alone while the OPFOR soldiers are out fighting on the desert. Army Community Services has opened a Fort Irwin Outreach Center in Barstow to provide necessary services for these families. Each company is also expected to participate in an Outreach Program for those junior enlisted soldiers who are married and living off post. Someone from their chain of command is to periodically check on the health and welfare of these families. As chaplain, I monitor this program on a company level and make regular visits to these families. This gives the young family a contact from someone who understands the hardships unique to the OPFOR and cares who about their needs. Support, counseling, and appropriate referrals have helped several families make the necessary adjustments to becoming proud members of an extended family—the OPFOR.

As an OPFOR regiment chaplain, I often hear comments such as, “Soviets don’t have Chaplains, what do you do in the OPFOR?” I smile and respond with something like, “Preach the Gospel. We need to hear it as much as anyone.” The fact is, we are not Soviets. We are soldiers in the United States Army with a dual mission to perform: to be ready to go to war and fight in defense of the freedoms and liberty of our nation, and as the Soviet fighting styled Opposing Force, provide the toughest and truest training possible for the rest of the United States Armor and Mechanized Infantry Units assigned in CONUS. We are proud to be the OPFOR, but we are prouder still to be the members of the United States Army.

As soldiers in the United States Army, we do not merely defend “mother homeland.” Rather, we defend freedom and liberty; freedom to believe in God as we understand Him, liberties to dream about tomorrow and then to follow that dream. These freedoms

and liberties have been an important part of our national heritage. Generations of soldiers before have lived and died for these principles. We stand ready to preserve these freedoms and liberties for generations to come. If necessary we also will give our lives in defense of freedom and liberty. Our faith in and commitment to God makes the difference in our soldiers. Our faith gives us something to believe in, something to hope for and something to sustain us. Our commitment gives us a cause for which to live, and if necessary, a cause for which to die. Whether we wear the Blue Force or the OPFOR uniform, we train to defend the principles of our nation and our heritage. We fight for God and country.

Although there are many days and weeks of field time in the desert, the longest hours are often spent waiting. The OPFOR soldier waits for orders to move to a new position, waits for the Blue Force to attack, waits for repair vehicles, waits for chow, waits for darkness, waits for light. These are opportunities to spend time with the soldiers, to show that someone cares enough to be with them and to listen, to offer words of encouragement, and to remind them of the presence and the peace of Christ.

Chaplains are also expected to conduct worship services, thus enabling soldiers in the "free exercise" of their faith. The constant combat mode of the OPFOR Regiment prohibits taking Sunday mornings off for a large gathering of soldiers to have "church." Rather, the Unit Ministry Team takes "church" to the soldiers seven days a week. Best times are carefully coordinated in advance with individual company commanders. These times and dates must be flexible because the battle scenerios change frequently. When a particular company is in a waiting period, the Unit Ministry Team moves among the soldiers announcing the time and location of field services. Platoon leaders and sergeants are helpful in getting the word out to the soldiers. Then we conduct group worship opportunities in company size units.

I have modified my Chaplain's Kit to include a cassette player with small amplified speakers. The music accompaniment is recorded in advance on audio cassette tape in the proper order. The words to non-copyrighted songs and scripture selections have been typed and reproduced so that each soldier attending has a complete worship service bulletin. Attendance at these company sized services has been as few as five and as many as seventy-five. The number of field service worshipers is affected by the scenerio and mission requirements, but it is important that soldiers who are in the field for two or more weeks have an opportunity to worship with others.

An essential part of effective ministry to the OPFOR is the Chaplain Assistant. He is more than a driver and someone to set up field services. He is another pair of eyes to perceive the needs of weary soldiers, and he is another set of ears to listen to their



concerns. As a part of the Regiment, he is a counselor and friend to the OPFOR soldiers. Both the chaplain and his assistant have gone through the OPFOR Academy. They participate with the discipline and excellence of those they are called to serve. They understand the OPFOR doctrine and mission and are careful not to compromise tactical security in the performance of their ministry.

When the OPFOR soldier sees either member of the Unit Ministry Team he knows he can talk to someone who shares the long hot days and the chilling cold nights of the desert, and with someone who believes in the importance of the OPFOR mission and the OPFOR soldier. Both chaplain and assistant wear the OPFOR uniform because they are part of the Regiment. They have learned from the example of our Lord, who became one with those he served. To effectively minister to the OPFOR, the Unit Ministry Team eats and sleeps with their soldiers, they laugh and cry with their soldiers, they live and die with their soldiers. And thanks to the miracle of MILES technology, they can live and die with their soldiers again tomorrow.

OPFOR soldiers are very proud of what they do. Their experience and expertise have given them the winning advantage that is so necessary in combat. In force-on-force training, however, their excellence translates into the most challenging opposition possible for the Blue Force. Because of the extra demands of the OPFOR mission, they have an added amount of stress and pressure from without. They need strength from within to sustain them. Courage, care, comfort, compassion, consistency, and the call of Christ are some of the resources the Unit Ministry Team can offer. The installation is also making constant improvements of existing facilities and new construction promises even better support in the days ahead. Army Community Services, Morale Support, Community Life Programs and the Installation Chapel provide opportunities for service members and their family members to enjoy their time and enrich their lives while stationed at Fort Irwin. Desert life may be rough, but it can also be rewarding.

Although the OPFOR looks like the enemy, they are not. They are the opposing force at the National Training Center, and they have souls, too. The OPFOR soldiers believe that the performance of their mission is essential to the strength of our country and the defense of liberty and freedom. They want to proudly say with the rest of the nation, "In God We Trust!"



## **A Personal Letter From An OPFOR Chaplain**

**Chaplain (MAJ) Karl Kroll**

The hour is late, and I'm tired. My body hurts from some new bruises from this morning's OPFOR attack. There is no padding in a loader's hatch, and I was bounced around pretty good. All I want to do right now is just sit back in my chair for a few minutes, think about the day, the soldiers, and the ministry, and then to share some of these thoughts about ministry to soldiers in this place. What does it mean to be a Catholic priest ministering to an OPFOR battalion? Well these are my ideas as I understand them right now.

This has been a very difficult year for me with regard to my pastoral involvement with soldiers. This has been perhaps the most demanding assignment of my life, but it has widened my understanding of what it means to be a Catholic priest for soldiers. The assignment has confronted and challenged me both physically and spiritually more than I ever imagined when I arrived at Fort Irwin, California, in March of 1985. The assignment has raised questions that I would like to share with you.

Is it possible for a Catholic priest to be an OPFOR battalion chaplain and run a full Catholic program at the same time? This was one of the key questions that concerned me during the first few weeks of being assigned to the OPFOR battalion. There are responsibilities within the battalion that each of us who has served as a battalion chaplain understands. There are also responsibilities for area Catholic coverage that will be wider than the needs of the



Chaplain Kroll is a Roman Catholic priest from the Archdiocese of Seattle. He is presently assigned to the 6-31st Battalion (Mechanized) Infantry, and has served previously with the 2-37th Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany, and the 3rd Basic Training Brigade, Fort Dix, New Jersey. Father Kroll served as an enlisted soldier from 1964 to 1967 and came on active duty as a chaplain in 1981.

battalion. These two areas of ministry could lead to tension and confusion at times unless two very important concepts are always clear.

The first concept concerns my vision of what being a priest means. Over the years I have never divided my priesthood into what I do for the battalion and what I do for area Catholic coverage. They are both a part of who I am as a priest, and the call that I received many years ago to minister to people. This does not mean that I don't pace myself. This is something that we all must do, if we are to be effective in ministry. I was not called to be a doctor, a lawyer, a social worker, or a line officer. I was called to minister to people as a priest, and in that service I must know very clearly who and what I am about.

The second concept that I have learned over the years is just as important. This is the vision of the Battalion Commander, and how he or she understands the role of the chaplain who is a priest. If the commander's vision is narrow or turned in upon itself, then there will be tension. If the commander's vision is turned out toward the community, then there will be less confusion. In over a year my present commander has never expressed the concept that I belong totally to him. He has always stressed to me the responsibilities that I have to minister to soldiers and family members within the larger framework. We have also discussed my role in the Army as a priest, and his vision has widened my understanding of ministry without hurting the central mission of the OPFOR battalion. Since I have related ministry in the battalion to a deeper understanding of ministry within the Army, it has enabled me to grow as a battalion chaplain.

One of the deeper questions that I have reflected upon is: Should a Catholic priest be a battalion chaplain? There are many answers to this questions—many pro and con points of view. It is a question that I have wrestled with for over five years. I have come to the conclusion that I do not know the answer. Although I do not know the answer, there are areas of interest generated by the question that I would like to look at.

As I have grown in my understanding of ministry within the Army, my assignments with battalions during the last five years have been very helpful to me. They have given me incomparable and invaluable experience working with soldiers and family members. My present assignment with an OPFOR battalion has widened my understanding of a priest's ministry within a combat situation more than I could have imagined. I know some will say we only train at the NTC. This is true, but it is much more for the soldiers and family members of the two OPFOR battalions. The stress and concepts of combat are very real here, and it was best expressed by my commader when he told me: "It is not actual combat here, but it is the closet we can get to the real thing." This is the environment;

and so I have had to become more flexible in my approach to ministry, because conditions change on the battle field each day of a training rotation. You also come face to face with your own mortality and having to minister to soldiers within this area.

There are many things to be considered when a priest is assigned to a battalion. We have to realize that the priest may be older than most chaplains coming on active duty. He will be, in some cases, one of the oldest officers in the battalion. I am 43 years old, and I learned several months ago that I am one of the youngest priests on active duty. If his age is not considered when he is assigned to a battalion, then there will be problems. I'm not that young captain anymore who can bounce back after a few hours of sleep. It takes my body more time to recover after an OPFOR mission.

Often a priest will also have additional responsibilities which will take him away from the battalion. These duties need to be explained by the supervisory chaplain to the battalion commander. The lines of communication and expectations must be understood by all those involved for the priest to be effective.

Today we face a shortage of priests, and there is a possibility there will be less priests in the Army in a few years from now. We may reach a point where it will not be possible to have a priest in a battalion. I would hope this does not happen, because of the experience a priest gains from working within a battalion. But if this becomes a reality, then we are going to have to take a closer look at how we define ministry for a Catholic priest within the larger Army system.

How do I see my ministry as a priest for those in the OPFOR battalion and those who live at Fort Irwin? I have begun to realize, as never before, that every person here is a part of myself and my ministry—for I am a part and member of them. For what I do is also done for other people and with other people and by other people; and what they do is done in me and by me and for me. Yet, each one of us still remains responsible for his share in the life of the community at Fort Irwin. John Donne said it so powerfully when he wrote: "No man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."

The above statement has also caused me to reflect upon another question. What do I mean when I try to live out the Gospel command to love those I serve? I have begun to realize that this Gospel command to love is not a mere abstract speculation. It is a moral truth that is to be embodied and given life. I have come to understand more and more that one who really loves another is not merely moved by the desire to see that person contented or prosperous in this world. If I am to love those I serve, then I must somehow enter more deeply into the mystery of God's love for them. It means getting dirty, greasy and sweaty along with the soldiers I



serve. Unless I take the risk to become involved with another's life, then love just remains a term in the dictionary. In this regard the OPFOR is a very special group of soldiers. Love means crying with a couple as they deal with their fear for their seven month old daughter who is in a coma; love means holding a soldier who had just seen his friend die in a training accident. Yes, I have begun to realize in a more powerful way that this love must not only seek the truth in the lives of those around me, but it can and must be found there as well.

Another key question that has concerned me since being assigned to an OPFOR battalion has to do with my prayer life. Prayer has always been an important part of my life, and I have always believed very strongly that a priest must be a man of prayer. A priest cannot call people to prayer unless his spiritual foundation is grounded in prayer. Over the past year, because of the mission of the OPFOR, I have begun to widen my own understanding of my prayer life. It has not been easy in several ways, but it has made me a better priest for the soldiers and family members that I serve.

Prayer is not something that is outside of me. It is a part of who I am, and for that reason it cannot fully be explained. I am uncomfortable with those who understand prayer as something separate from themselves. It cannot be separate, because prayer always involves a deep commitment of who we are. We will never be able to realize the depth of our religious experience, if we only observe prayer from the outside. Without the desire and the inner need to rise up and meet God, prayer remains a dead experience. When we reach out toward God with the desire to be converted, to speak to him and find ourselves in him, then prayer becomes a means of spiritual growth and a deep inner joy. Prayer has become a part of ourselves and no longer a separate exercise.

The minute I begin to expand my understanding of prayer, I begin to see two other areas of my ministry to soldiers and family members of the OPFOR in a new way. The first realization is that I am to help those I serve to understand that the New Testament faith is a principle of action. This dynamism of faith arises in the New Testament from a personal encounter between Christ and ourselves. I firmly believe that faith should not be understood as a mere agreement of certain minimal theological terms, but a way of action that causes a revolution in our personal lives. This revolution in our lives should lead us to a deep appreciation and commitment to God.

And finally, what does this revolution of faith call me to share in the actions of my life with those I serve as a priest? I'm called, as each chaplain is called, to share his or her religious tradition. An important part of my religious tradition calls me to share the Easter message with those I minister to. The message is Christ is alive! Christ cannot be some mythical person who died over 2,000 years ago, but a person who is very much alive in my life today. Yet, this

requires some growth on my part, because I can no longer live with the Jesus of my childhood years - but the Christ of an adult. This involves a risk on my part. Once I begin to widen my spiritual horizon, then I begin to deal with my doubts. But for Christ to be alive, then I must take that step in faith. If I do not then he remains some mythical figure of the past. Thus, I firmly believe to be a Christian means being able to take that step, to risk, and then being able to experience the joy the apostles felt when Christ appeared among them and greeted them.

Well, this brings my letter to you to a close. I have tried to share some thoughts with you concerning the development of my ministry this past year as chaplain to the OPFOR. I have grown more than I realized, and this letter has helped me bring some of the concepts into focus. It has been helpful for me, and I hope you will have gained something from it.

## **A Brigade Chaplain's Ministry: The Plan and Execution**

**Chaplain (MAJ) Ronald N. Johnson**

One of the most intense and demanding training experiences a soldier can have is gained in a rotation at the National Training Center (NTC). At the NTC, soldiers are stressed to the limits of their endurance—physically and mentally. For commanders and their staffs, these demands are coupled with performance pressures and the need to do well. “Win at NTC!” is the constant byword.

But winning is not easy. The Opposing Forces (OPFOR), the “Regiment,” is superbly trained, and well equipped. They have the benefit of size and experience, and they have the home field advantage. Because they fight there daily, they know the terrain—the desert. At Fort Irwin there is always the desert, always dry, always dusty, and in the summer sun, unbearably hot. The High Mojave is not forgiving ground. When there is no moon at night, nothing is darker. The wadis and boulders make night operations unusually dangerous. The training is hazardous and sometimes deadly. Soldiers have died at the NTC. Nothing short of war can equal the environment of the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, and that is its great value. NTC trains soldiers for combat and chaplains for combat ministry.

Within a six month period, I trained twice at the National Training Center. I was there in June and July 1985, and again in January 1986. In both rotations I was the brigade chaplain for the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized). The two rotations were similar, and the concept for ministry was in each case the same. But there were also differences. One important difference was the weather. In January 1986, the climate was pleasant, with highs in the



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upper sixties and with nightly lows in the mid-thirties. The previous summer, the midday norm was one hundred and twenty degrees. The greatest difference, however, between those two rotations was in the levels of experience. In January, six months after our first rotation, the experience levels—across the board—of the soldiers, the task force commanders, the staffs and the chaplains were substantially higher. This considerably influenced the way we conducted our ministry.

Before going to Fort Irwin, the 1st Brigade, Fourth Infantry Division (Mechanized) had participated in the Winter Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER) 1985. Tactically, during that exercise, our performance had been superb. We fought with our own organic battalions, the 1-10 Infantry, 1-12 Infantry and 3/68 Armor. A dismounted night march by the 1-10 Infantry through the German forests during one of the coldest, snowiest European winters since 1945, spear-headed the Orange Force attack. The Blue Force was caught completely off guard and never really recovered. Such action characterized the 1st Brigade. We were at the summit of combat readiness.

This successful field experience was followed by very important changes in personnel. Between February 1985, when we returned from Germany, and mid-June 1985, when we deployed to the National Training Center, 1st Brigade Headquarters experienced an almost one hundred percent turn over of its staff. We changed executive officers, took on a new S-1, S-2, S-3, and a headquarters company commander as well. There was also substantial turbulence among other officers and enlisted. I left for CAS 3 almost immediately after returning from Europe, and I did not get back to Fort Carson until late May. For me, going to Fort Irwin with the 1st Brigade in June was like being assigned to a new unit. I hardly knew anybody. The impact of this personnel turbulence upon the brigade staff was extraordinary. In contrast, there were no changes in key personnel within the brigade between our summer rotation and our deployment in January 1986.

A vast difference in the experience levels of the chaplains between the two rotations also accounted for one dimension of the contrast. During the summer of 1985, one task force chaplain was a National Guard Officer who had not been on active duty, except for summer training, since Viet Nam. The other task force chaplain was not a chaplain at all. He was a seminarian and a second lieutenant chaplain candidate, whose Army experience was limited to the week before we deployed. The Forward Support Battalion (FSB) chaplain was a borrowed asset from another unit, because our FSB had no chaplain assigned. The Division Artillery (DIVARTY) chose to rotate chaplains in and out instead of leaving one in the slot for the whole exercise.

In the January 1986 rotation both maneuver battalions were Regular Army, from the 4th Infantry Division. Our mechanized infantry battalion during the summer had been National Guard. As for chaplains, during the winter rotation, I had in the task forces two of the best troop chaplains in the 4th Infantry Division, Chaplain (CPT) Jim Agnew and Chaplain (CPT) Jim Schnorrenberg, both of whom had my absolute confidence. Chaplain (MAJ) Dave O'Connell, the DIVARTY Chaplain, came as the artillery battalion chaplain and remained for the entire rotation. Only in the FSB was the chaplain new and inexperienced. Although he had been assigned to the battalion for only six months, his soldiers knew him. The differences in my confidence in my subordinate chaplains, and my own increased experience, shaped the way I approached my ministry. However, I can look back at both of those rotations and say that in each we performed well. Ministry took place, and the pastoral needs of our soldiers were met.

Planning before deployment is important for any exercise. For each rotation I developed with my subordinate chaplains a concept of ministry, gave thought to logistics, made load plans, and developed the chaplain input to the family pre-development briefings. I also prepared and briefed the Unit Ministry Teams (UMT) on my concept of ministry for the operation and on my expectations for them. Prior planning for the winter rotation was better executed, and it was done in a more relaxed way.

My concept of ministry for both rotations was the same. During the force-on-force phase, I was intent on adherence to FM 16-5, *The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations*. One statement was particularly critical to the development of my approach. In speaking of combat ministry, FM 16-5 says, "Denominational ministry gives way to ministry. Unit ministry is the only type feasible for the task force during most of the battle." I am convinced that during force-on-force operations at Fort Irwin, even during periods of reconstitution or after-action reviews, the coordination and provision of denominational coverage by chaplains is so difficult that it should not be attempted.

Rather, the approach should be exactly what we would do in combat: give saturated coverage, to include denominational coverage, before and after the battle, in the tactical assembly area (Dust Bowl), while drawing equipment, at the end of hostilities, or during reconstitution (Dust Bowl, while turning in equipment). Therefore, I planned daily Protestant and Catholic services during the equipment draw and turn-in. During the force-on-force, we went strictly to unit ministry. Unit ministry means that the unit chaplain provides pastoral care to all of his soldiers without regard to their religious allegiance. Unit ministry also means that the chaplain provides ecumenical field worship opportunities to the extent that his conscience and church



regulations allow. Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs), if they are available, should provide the sacrament of Holy Communion to Roman Catholics in units without a Roman Catholic chaplain. 1st Brigade had no LEMs during either rotation.

My concept of area coverage for both rotations was simple. Task force chaplains covered their assigned forces and attachments, except for their headquarters company and field trains. Because 1st Brigade located its task force's field trains in the brigade support area (BSA), these became the responsibility of the brigade chaplain for coverage. The field artillery battalion chaplain covered his headquarters and service battery, and the firing batteries. The task force chaplains, however, had responsibility for ministry to attached artillery. The FSB chaplain provided ministry to his battalion and other tenants of the BSA not specifically covered by the brigade chaplain. The FSB chaplain was especially enjoined to provide pastoral care to soldiers in the medical company clearing facility. As brigade chaplain, I covered the brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC), brigade headquarters elements in the BSA, task force field trains, Army aviation, and rotation soldiers at the installation hospital.

For the summer 1985 rotation, the biggest problem that I encountered in planning and execution was not having active duty chaplains for the task forces. The 2-120 Infantry, North Carolina Army National Guard, brought its chaplain to the exercise. While talking with him by telephone prior to deploying, I found that he was not familiar with Army doctrine for combat ministry. I mailed him a copy of FM 16-5 and ask him to acquaint himself with it.

The problem of a chaplain for our own 3/68 Armor was even more acute. This battalion had not had a chaplain assigned to it for at least the past two and one-half years. It had been covered, instead, by the brigade chaplain. Because I had provided coverage for 3/68 Armor during REFORGER, while at the same time continuing my brigade responsibilities, I was determined that this would not happen again. I made every effort to get a reserve chaplain assigned for the rotation. Although I was ultimately unsuccessful in this endeavor, I accepted a chaplain candidate for the position. This officer, a senior in seminary, arrived at Fort Carson one week before we left for California. He was interested, aggressive, committed and determined; but he had no experience with troop ministry. On the one hand, we had a battalion not used to having a chaplain and not knowing the support required, and on the other a chaplain candidate who had no training for the practice of troop ministry. Before the exercise began, I spent several hours talking with him about the duties of a battalion chaplain and another hour or so at the chalk board teaching brigade and battalion structure and battlefield locations. I gave him a copy of FM 16-5 with instructions to learn it. This last minute preparation



and his enthusiasm carried him through the exercise with a very acceptable level of performance.

For the January 1986 rotation, the planning was more detailed but also more relaxed. I had all active duty Army chaplains going with me, and these were chaplains who were, for the most part, experienced with the units that they were to serve. Because of the Christmas holiday, we found it difficult to get together. I briefed each chaplain separately on the concept of ministry, chaplain locations, and area and denominational coverage. Because New Year's Day and the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday fell during the rotation, we made plans for intentional ministry on these occasions. Finally, I looked closely at chaplain deployment and redeployment travel plans in order to make sure I had adequate chaplain coverage at all times.

Pre-deployment briefings were conducted for family members prior to both rotations. The brigade and battalion S-1's were the proponents for the briefings, and the chaplains, Army Community Service personnel, and the Staff Judge Advocate provided input. Our interest was in making sure that waiting spouses knew what programs were available to them through Family Life, and that they knew who would provide chaplain coverage to family members while the battalion chaplain was gone.

Once chaplains were on the ground at the National Training Center, religious services were held daily in the Dust Bowl. For both rotations, chaplains arrived with the first of the main body of troops. In June 1985, we did not have a Roman Catholic chaplain available during the equipment-draw phase, so personnel were made aware of the daily Masses on the post. In January 1986, we had our own Roman Catholic priest with us, and daily Roman Catholic and General Protestant services were conducted. These services continued until the brigade moved out of the Dust Bowl to begin the force-on-force exercise. During the January rotation we were particularly concerned with religious coverage during New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Although we had coordinated during early December with Fort Irwin for Roman Catholic coverage, we found that the priest designated for Catholic coverage of rotation forces was on leave when our troops arrived. Therefore, Protestant chaplains provided ecumenical services on 31 December and 1 January.

One of the exceptionally fine things that happened by way of troop support, resulted from an on-the-spot decision by Chaplain Jim Schnorrenberg and the brigade assistant S-1 to provide movies and televised football to our soldiers on New Year's Day. Chaplain Schnorrenberg had arrived on 30 December and was the acting brigade chaplain until my arrival on 2 January. Realizing that morale support was needed for New Year's Day, Chaplain Schnorrenberg and the assistant S-1 coordinated for a cable TV hookup at the post

chapel and for a VCR and TV to be set up in a tent in the tent city area. The football game viewings and VCR movies were well received and attended as duty allowed.

In addition to daily worship services, during the equipment-draw phase, much emphasis was placed on a ministry of presence with soldiers, both in their work areas and in the Dust Bowl tent city. Ministry did not seem as critical, however, during the equipment draw, as during the frustrations of the turn-in. Services held during the draw were poorly attended, partially because of indifference on the part of the soldiers, but more because of our failure to get the word out about service times. This had been true of our summer rotation, and was equally true in January 1986. Although we used the chain of command to disseminate service information, as well as fliers posted in the mess tents, an even more intentional approach to advertising was clearly needed.

Once we moved from the Dust Bowl, the principle of unit ministry was in effect. Chaplains located and operated within their units in accordance with FM 16-5. Task force chaplains located and moved with their combat trains because the aid station and casualty collection point for a task force are located there. By doctrine, a chaplain's primary responsibility during combat is ministry to the wounded. During both rotations, the task force chaplains were able to make real world headway by ministering to simulated casualties. The chaplain would approach the casualty, check out the soldier's tag to determine the nature of his wounds, and joke with him about getting hit. From this initial joking, the conversation would often turn to the serious, as the chaplain asked what the soldier's relation to God might be if this were combat and the wound were real. Crosses, rosaries, tracts and Bibles were offered, and quite often, the simulated casualty would be present at the chaplain's next field service.

Communications is another reason for the task force chaplain to locate with the combat trains. The S-1 can best support the chaplain's communication needs. Further, there is constant resupply convoy traffic between the combat trains and the forward maneuver companies. If the chaplain has his own transportation, he can move in convoy. If he does not, he can easily catch a ride. My chaplains were directed to avoid driving on the battlefield alone, although they did not always comply. In January, both task force chaplains had their own vehicles, and both were radio equipped. During the previous summer, only the National Guard chaplain had a vehicle, and it had no radio. The chaplain candidate, with 3/68 Armor, initially had problems in obtaining transportation support although he was located in the combat trains. When he finally hit upon the solution of telling the company commanders, in the presence of the observer-controller, that if they wanted religious coverage for their



companies they would pick him up and bring him back. Chaplain mobility is clearly enhanced by location with the combat trains.

Finally, locating the task force chaplain with the combat trains provides relative security, while keeping the chaplain forward. It is important for the chaplain to be able to move up to his forward elements, as the battle situation permits, and it is important for him to be relatively close to the Operations Center (TOC). My belief is that locating in the combat trains is not only in keeping with doctrine, but that it also works best. Some chaplains argue that the task force chaplain should locate not in the combat, but in the field trains. Their point is that it is much more secure and that the chaplain can move forward with the logistics resupply convoys moving up to the Logistics Resupply Point (LRP). My understanding of Forward Thrust precludes locating the chaplain that far back. To quote from FM 16-5, "Under Forward Thrust doctrine, religious support is pushed forward to the smaller, more exposed elements of the task force. Personal contact increases in value to the soldier and unit as the battlefield increases in lethality and intensity. Ministry needs increase due to mass casualties, hasty burials, and isolation. The chaplain and chaplain assistant accompany soldiers on the battlefield, moving frequently among forward elements where ministry needs are greatest." To do this effectively, the chaplain must locate with the combat trains, not the field trains. The argument for locating with the field trains is chaplain security. In both rotations, we did have chaplains captured and killed because they were located with the combat trains. In combat, their capture or death would be real. What is the trade off?

The ministry of the task force chaplains was effective during both rotations. All of the chaplains, in both the summer of 1985 and in January 1986, operated essentially in the same way. Worship services were conducted as opportunities permitted, and the chaplains soon gave up the idea of pre-planning services. When they were with an element where the opportunity was at hand, they opened their chaplain's kit and held a service. Frequent services for small groups of soldiers, rather than pre-planned, less frequent services, worked best for us during both rotations. This explains why it is extremely difficult to plan and coordinate denominational coverage for the task force elements during the force-on-force. The use of LEMs in the task forces surely must be considered.

In January, my two experienced, active duty Army chaplains hit upon the idea of tying chaplain flags to the antennas of their vehicles for increased visibility. I suppose they must have been trusting to Divine Providence that only our forces, and not the enemy, would notice them. Curiously, they did not draw unfriendly attention. Even more incredible is that our line officers and noncommissioned officers did not recognize the problem. The



chaplains saw their error only when it was pointed out to them by the observer-controllers.

In January, also, one of the task force chaplains, moving in convoy with his combat trains, was captured when the convoy was ambushed. He was actually shot in the back while trying to escape and evade, but his Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) did not work, so he was ruled a prisoner. His Communication-Electronic-Operation-Instructions (CEOI) was taken from him, and call signs and password for the entire brigade were compromised. There was, however, nothing that the chaplain could have done differently.

During the July 1985 rotation, my chaplain candidate discovered the hard cost of losing his protective mask. During both rotations, the task force chaplains, with varying levels of experience, did well in terms of battlefield survivability and nothing to compromise themselves or those around them.

We did not have the same level of success with ministry during either rotation in the BSA. The problem, in both cases, was FSB coverage. In June and July 1985, the 1st FSB did not have a chaplain assigned. This rotation came almost immediately after the reorganization of the Division Support Command (DISCOM), and chaplains were not available for these new slots. The chaplain who went with us to Fort Irwin to provide ministry to the FSB was working in a newly organized battalion to which he was not assigned. He knew no one, and no one knew him. He had no time before and little time during the rotation to establish pastoral relationships and rapport. When a chaplain was assigned after the return to Fort Carson, he worked mightily to establish those relationships and to develop an atmosphere in which support for his ministry could take place. He was effective in this, but shortly after our arrival at the NTC in January 1986, it became necessary, because of a family emergency, to send the new FSB chaplain home.

At this point, as brigade chaplain, I took over coverage for the BSA. I did not have time, if I were to continue my brigade responsibilities, to do much in the way of ministry of presence among the companies in the BSA. My primary concern was to provide worship opportunities. The BSA was the one place, during the force-on-force, where denominational services could reasonably take place; and accordingly, coordination was made with the Roman Catholic chaplain. Announcements of service times and locations were made through the S-1 at command and staff meetings. In addition, I went personally to each company commander to coordinate the service times. On both occasions of scheduled Roman Catholic services, when the chaplain arrived, no soldiers came. In my asking, I never found a soldier who knew that the services had been scheduled. As for my services, on one occasion I drove up to a

company two hours in advance of the service to remind the company commander. When I came to do the service, no one had announced it. I arranged to come back the next day, and again the company commander forgot to put the word out. In another company, after arranging for a service on Sunday, I arrived only to have the company commander tell me that he did not realize that it was Sunday. It is easy to draw conclusions as to what was wrong in the BSA. Command support for the religious program was obviously needed. But the biggest problem, it seems to me, was that for a number of reasons, during two rotations at the NTC, we were never able to put and keep a chaplain in the FSB to achieve the necessary rapport with the soldiers and their leaders.

I am a former Transportation Corps officer, who commanded a transportation company in Viet Nam. Although most of my time in the chaplaincy has been with the infantry and with combat engineers, I have a special place in my heart for combat service support soldiers. They are a special breed who often do not feel the same sense of esteem about their jobs as the soldiers in maneuver battalions. In addition, these combat service support soldiers tend to work shifts and have difficulty getting away for religious services. We have tended to try to hold company-level services in the BSA, and this does not work well. We have learned, with the infantry and the armor, that numerous short services, held where the soldiers are, work best. The same sort of approach should take place in the BSA. Because of the number of troops involved, one battalion chaplain may not be able to do this. Perhaps we should give consideration to augmenting this coverage for worship services with any other chaplains who might be available; e.g., the DISCOM chaplain or the assistant division chaplain. We have paid a lot of attention in the past to ministry in the task forces. We need to give more attention, at brigade, division and even Chaplain School levels, to developing doctrine for ministry in the BSA.

My own coverage responsibilities, in addition to brigade headquarters personnel in the brigade TOC and in the BSA (S-1 and S-4 shops), were to the 4th Aviation Battalion, a unit without chaplain coverage for most of both rotations, to the field trains of both task forces, located by brigade policy in the BSA, and to rotation force personnel admitted to the Weed Army Hospital at Fort Irwin. Unlike the task force chaplains, Army doctrine regarding where the brigade chaplain locates to provide his ministry is less developed. My personal preference is to locate with the bulk of my soldiers at the brigade TOC. However, as I discovered during REFORGER 1985, TOC's move frequently; and if I were forward visiting task force chaplains, or back in the BSA or division rear on business - always without a radio - I might very well return to find my home had moved. While during downrange exercises on Fort



Carson, I always located with the brigade TOC, but I found during REFORGER 1985, and during both rotations at the NTC, that it was better for the brigade chaplain to locate in the vicinity of the administrative and logistics operation center (ALOC) within the BSA. Because the brigade S-1 and S-4 are located there, communication needs are easily met.

I prefer to be mobile. Downrange on Fort Carson, I never erected a tent and lived instead on the back of my pickup truck. I used this same approach at the NTC during our summer rotation, quartering the pickup in the vicinity of the ALOC at night and moving forward during the day. During the winter rotation, I quartered with the brigade S-1 and S-4, in a hex tent. At first light, I would move forward to the brigade TOC, and from there go wherever my ministry required. I always came back in the evenings to the brigade TOC for the nightly command and staff meetings and then to the ALOC for the night. Even though I had no radio, my commander and my subordinate chaplains knew where and how to locate me. When I was away from the TOC during the day, I made sure that my intended location was known.

While I personally conducted worship services for brigade headquarters personnel at the TOC and at the ALOC, the greatest part of my ministry within brigade headquarters was a ministry of presence to the personnel, the commander, and the staff. I tried to visit headquarters soldiers in the vicinity of the TOC twice daily, once each morning and again in the evening. I also visited in the ALOC twice a day. After the loss of our FSB chaplain in January and throughout the July rotation, I made frequent trips to visit patients at the clearing station in the BSA. Depending on the census, I visited the installation hospital as needed.

During the summer rotation, because of the inexperience of both task force chaplains and the chaplain candidate, I was much more concerned about getting forward to visit. I found that the best way to contact them during the force-on-force was to travel with the ammunition, fuel and rations supply run up to the LRP. This gave me maximum security and relieved any concerns about locating my chaplains. If the LRP were not co-located with the combat trains, there would always be traffic to the trains. The biggest problem with this was the time that it required. We would leave the BSA around 1600 and not return until early the next day.

At the conclusion of the force-on-force and live fire training, rotation forces return to the Dust Bowl to turn in equipment and then to go home. Some personnel, in our case a provisional company, go to the Marine Corps base at Yermo, California, to rail load the equipment being returned to home base. This is really the most difficult time during the entire rotation. Some soldiers begin returning home, and some are left behind to turn in vehicles, for rail loading at



Yermo, or to go back to the maneuver area to fill holes or pull range police. The approach we took for both rotations during this phase was to have daily Protestant and Roman Catholic services in the Dust Bowl and to provide an intentional ministry of presence to soldiers working on vehicles at the wash racks and in the maintenance areas. We also made visits to Yermo; but because of the demands of the work there, we did not do this particular ministry well. It might have been better to have placed a chaplain at Yermo for the beginning to the end of the load out. At the least, a chaplain should visit the rail head daily.

Daily services in the Dust Bowl during turn-in were better attended than those during the equipment draw for both rotations. Yet the attendance was not what it could have been. I believe that this was not so much indifference as lack of opportunity. Several of the chaplains suggested that multiple daily services should be held in the morning and at night. This would clearly increase the burden on chaplains, but it may very well be the fix.

Now that the two rotations are over, and I am out of the brigade, I can look back and see clearly that both rotations to the National Training Center were excellent learning experiences. If I were to go again, there are things that I would do differently. I would spend a lot more time in monitoring ministry in the BSA, and I would spend some hopefully productive time in planning for intentional proactive ministry to combat service support personnel. I would also want to look again at how we do ministry during the turn-in. This critical time requires a proactive, intentional ministry when the chaplains are tired, too. I have always sent my chaplains home with their own main body of troops, while I stay to cover the remaining few. But even when the unit is down to the last twenty-five percent, there are sometimes more than 700 soldiers remaining. Perhaps most, or all of the chaplains, should be on the last flight out.

The mission at the National Training Center is exciting, demanding and productive. It offers an excellent opportunity for chaplains to develop their own soldier skills, provides real world ministry under conditions of acute stress, and offers an opportunity for the development of effective combat ministry. I am thankful that I twice had this opportunity.

## **Ministry In The Forward**

### **Support Battalion**

**Chaplain (CPT) Ernest E. LaMertha, II**

I am a protestant chaplain serving as the battalion chaplain for the First Support Battalion (Forward), 5th Infantry Division, Fort Polk, Louisiana. This is my second rotation to the National Training Center. We were at NTC during August 85, and again during November and December 85. Tasked with providing both Catholic and Protestant coverage, I follow a definite ministry plan. In this article, I want to share this plan and how I was able to carry it out at NTC.

The Brigade Chaplain and I share coverage of the complete BSA. With his assigned transportation he is able to cover the more distant units. If one of the forward chaplains is unable to cover his field trains, then the Brigade Chaplain provides religious services. As a matter of policy, the Brigade Chaplain regularly visits all these units.

When planning for ministry in the field, I look ahead to a two or three day period of services. Primarily I hold services at my HQ/A, my B-Maintenance Company, my C-Medical Company, the POL site, the class I ration break, the Ammo Supply Point (ASP), the 5th Signal Unit, and the transportation unit. I also share coverage of the 7th Engineer Field Trains, and the ADA Field Trains with the Brigade Chaplain. During two or three days, I hold seven to nine services.



Chaplain LaMertha currently serves as chaplain to the 5th Combat Aviation Battalion, 5th Infantry Division, Fort Polk, Louisiana. He is endorsed as an Army chaplain by the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. Before coming on active duty in April of 1984, Chaplain LaMertha had served in the Navy for six years and in the Arizona and California National Guard. He is a graduate of Arizona State University and Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada, California.

I check with each unit to find an opportune time for services. Neither the day of a move, nor the day after a move, is good. In my plan, the day of a move is concerned with helping to break down the S1-S4 tent, filling in protective positions, and moving to a new location. At the new location, the Unit Ministry Team (UMT) must help set up tents and camouflage and begin to dig protective positions. As members of the S1-S4 team, the UMT shares their GP Medium tent and works with them in their tactical duties. I spend the morning after the move finishing our 8-10 person protective position.

During the most recent rotation to the National Training Center, we brought with us heavy 8 x 2 ft. PCP metal covers for our protective positions. We sank a hole 3 or 4 ft. deep; 4 ft wide and 7 ft. long. We built up 3 or 4 layers of sand bags around the sides, covered it with PCP and 2 layers of sand bags. Two of these positions met the needs of the S1-S4 team and took up at least the first morning after a move. We need this completed within 12 hours after arrival.

My unit visitation for visiting the troops and setting up services begins on the afternoon of the first day. I plan my services for the weekend around the tactical situation and movements. I usually look toward to two days of visitation and two to three days for services over a weekly cycle. If we move on Saturday, I probably will plan services for Monday and Tuesday. If we move on Sunday, I will have services on Friday and Saturday, or Tuesday and Wednesday. There is often a unit that doesn't fit into the schedule so that I have to cover them on a third day. For weekday moves I plan services during the entire Friday-Saturday-Sunday-Monday period. During my unit visitation, I look forward to the next services as much as possible and announce them to the troops. In addition to this unit coverage, I also plan early visits to the field hospital.

During the most recent rotation to the National Training Center, we moved to the field Saturday night. Sunday morning was spent establishing our location. Sunday afternoon I began visitation. I planned field services for Monday and Tuesday. On Monday HQ/A at 0900, C at 1000, B at 1100, 5th Signal at 1500. The morning services were too close. I needed 1 1/2 to 2 hours between service time. 1000 hours was bad for C-Medical Company because it was during their heavy sick call; 1500 hrs would have been better. 1600 hrs is often bad because of dinner. On Tuesday I planned services for 1600 hrs at the combined POL and class I location. This time was good for POL but not for the class I ration break. After the trucks had returned for the day, I held services at the transportation unit at 1830.

Wednesday was a day for visitation; and Thursday was again a day for a move. I finished setting up on Friday and did visitation that afternoon and during Saturday. I held services on Sunday at



0900 for HQ/A; 1100 at B; 1300 at ASP; 1500 at C. 1900 was planned for the transportation unit, but due to a 100% alert it was postponed until Wednesday evening. Monday saw services at POL at 0900 and 5th Signal at 1500. I had planned services at the class I ration break at 1600 but this was a bad time due to chow. Services were rescheduled for 1200 Tuesday — between their picking up rations and delivering them. Since we did not move again, the remainder of time was spent doing visitation.

For Catholic coverage we use Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEM's). During may Aug 85 rotation I was able to have a LEM travel with me to most of my Protestant services and to hold Catholic services at the same time. In the last rotation, the LEM's either planned services at the same time or had services at separate times.

For both Catholic and Protestant coverage we would let other units in the area know of services near their locations. I try to have services in as many individual locations as I can. I have noticed that people come out when I come to them, but they seldom come to me.

The chaplain assistant is part of the Unit Ministry Team, UMT, as well as part of the S1-S4 team. I try to plan ahead with the NCO's so that on days of services the assistant is with me. On other days the assistant also performs necessary duties with the rest of the S1-S4 team. The assistant will be on KP; mans the M-60 position; and prepares and mans our fighting position as required. The assistant takes turns with the rest of the E4s and below in performing their duties.

Since I do not have designated transportation, I use the S1 vehicle when available. If this vehicle is not available for visitation, then I put my ruck sack on and walk. If it is not available for services, I have the units pick me up. During the last rotation to the National Training Center, the S1 vehicle was available for all my services, but I still walked for some visitation. I considered it exercise. Often when I walked, I am picked up and taken to my destination even by people traveling in the opposite direction.

During both rotations I was pleased with attendance figures for the field services. My first services had 14 at HQ/A; 7 at C; 25 at B; 11 at 5th Signal; 11 at POL - class I and 16 at transportation. My second services had 11 at HQ/A; 29 at B; 10 at ASP; 8 at POL; 11 at 5th Signal; 11 at class I and 20 at transportation. I am unaware of the attendance at the LEM services during this rotation. During the previous rotation, attendance for the Roman Catholic LEM services only amounted to 2 or 3 per location, but this type of service is still new and the personnel are not use to having LEMs perform the services. I would like to have a LEM in each preaching location but this has not been possible. One of my major concerns has to do with the further development of the LEM coverage.

Our NTC coverage went well. I had a plan, and I was able to execute it. Long before arriving at the National Training Center, I had established the plan for ministry during Field Training Exercises at Fort Polk. Ministry at the National Training Center saw the implementation of the plan, and with the real-world challenges of the combat environment, a refinement of that plan to meet the needs and challenges of the situations as they occurred.

## The Lay Eucharistic Minister In The Brigade

Chaplain (LTC) Gary T. Sanford

As the number of Roman Catholic priests in the Army continues to dwindle at an alarming rate, the effects of this terrible shortage of priests are felt on every post and in every aspect of the chaplaincy. It bears on the frequency of the celebrations of the Sacraments, on the proclamation of the Word, and on effective pastoral care for God's people - the soldier and the soldier's family. But nowhere is the shortage more acutely felt than in what has been the priest's sacramental ministry to the soldier in the field. Because of the reduction of Catholic chaplains, Catholic priests are no longer able to begin to cover all units in the field. This problem is particularly acute at Fort Polk, at Fort Carson, and on similar posts where soldiers spend more time in the field than do the notoriously field-weary soldiers stationed in West Germany.

Today we have only three priests at Polk, and two of them are senior in rank and age. It is totally unreasonable and unrealistic to expect a few senior priests, to be *CHICKEN CHAPLAINS*—flying here and there, for as long as they can hold out, for ineffective and inadequate ministry. At Fort Polk we have struggled with the problems produced by the shortage of priests for some time, and we have a solution to offer.

At Fort Polk we have developed, under the leadership of Chaplain (LTC) Donald P. McHugh, Chaplain (LTC) James J. Jagielski and myself, a workable answer to the problem. We have a Lay Eucharistic Ministers program—a LEM program that is more



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than words—it works. The LEM program at Fort Polk provides each battalion and each company with Catholic coverage in the field.

## **Getting Started**

The units at Fort Polk go to the National Training Center about four times a year. We cannot send a priest each time; and even if we were able, one priest could hardly provide an adequate ministry of Word and Sacraments to that number of soldiers in that environment. Although there are two priests permanently assigned to Fort Irwin, their heavy commitments to Fort Irwin's Catholic community as well as to the permanent party OPFOR soldiers, prevent their providing substantial coverage to rotation units. The Lay Eucharistic Ministry has been our solution for providing an adequate ministry of Word and Sacrament to soldiers of Fort Polk on rotation at the National Training Center.

Before each rotation an appeal is made to the members of the Catholic parish for those willing to serve in this ministry. Believe it or not, Catholic lay persons are eager for the opportunity for lay ministry. We think that part of the reason they are so quick to volunteer is because of the thorough training program that we give them before the rotation to the National Training Center begins. Attendance at these training sessions is very good. There are very few dropouts. During the last rotation, it worked out that all five Protestant chaplains with the 1st Brigade had at least one LEM working with him. The LEMS ranged from LTC to PFC, and each a highly motivated Catholic layman.

## **The LEM Kit**

In addition to the special training given to each Lay Eucharistic Minister, each is given the "Standard LEM Kit." The LEM Kit is made of ammo boxes painted black with white crosses stenciled on each side. Inside each LEM Kit are the hosts, rosaries, crosses, missalettes, and other literature for distribution to the soldiers. The kits look so sharp—so military and yet so religious—there is no doubt that this LEM is on a mission from "Above." The LEM is armed for ministry.

The consecrated hosts are the most important items carried in the LEM kit, and they are provided by the priests stationed at Fort Irwin. In the Dust Bowl of the National Training Center, at a mass before the beginning of the training exercises, each LEM is given a quantity of consecrated hosts to be placed in the kit and carried for administration to the soldiers in field services later in the week.

The system of supply and resupply devised for the last rotation illustrates how this method serves the troops in the field. On 28 November at 0730, in the Dust Bowl a joint Protestant and Catholic

service was held. At this service, Father Kroll, of Fort Irwin, consecrated enough hosts to give the LEMS those that would be distributed in the field later in the week. The BSA Cammander, another LEM, was given enough extra hosts to resupply as needed in the field. Also some LEMS, whose mission permitted their leaving the field, returned to the garrison during the exercise to attend Mass and to receive other hosts for the soldiers. In these two ways the LEMS were kept resupplied with the required hosts.

## **LEM Services**

The services conducted by the LEMS take a variety of shapes. Sometimes the services are conducted by the LEMS entirely on their own. Other times they join with Protestants for the liturgy of the word—scripture, singing, and perhaps a homily—and then separate for the liturgy of the sacrament and communion. Sometimes the Protestant and Catholic services are held at the same time and in the same general area but not together.

Often the LEMS use the front of the chaplain's vehicle for the distribution of communion, while the chaplain uses the back for the continuation of the Protestant service. During last Advent, one LEM brought a small advent wreath with him in his Kit and lit its candles for the joint Protestant and Catholic service. When the candles were lighted, the soldiers joined in prayer, sang a Christmas carol, listened to the Scripture readings, and then separated for the distribution of communion.

## **Limitations of the LEM Program**

The LEM in no way takes the place of the Catholic priest. The Lay Eucharistic Minister helps the priest to distribute communion and to bring fellowship to as many Catholics as possible. Commenting after a service conducted by a Lay Eucharistic Minister, the First Brigade Commander shared the sentiments of many when he said, "The LEM can't ever replace having an actual priest sharing the Mass with the soldier. I would like to see even the Chief of Chaplains out having Mass with the troops if they are so short of other priests."

Even with one LEM in each battalion there are limitations on the amount of time and availability of this ministry. The LEM's primary mission as a soldier must take priority over the requirements of ministry. For example, because LEMS are often the battalion commander, the Brigade FSO, a truck driver, or a tanker, the LEM is not always available when needed. Because of these limitations, one Lay Eucharistic Minister is needed for each company or battery and that is the goal for the program at Fort Polk.

## Summary

The LEM program is a wonderful opportunity to provide ministry to the Catholic soldier in the field. With the continuing shortage of priests, it may be the *only* way to provide a sacramental ministry. It is not a ministry that can be achieved in a moment. Proper recruiting, training, and motivating is essential before the LEMs are sent out with the consecrated hosts. Moreover, all chaplains—Protestants and Catholics must be trained in the theology and the practicality of this special ministry.

The service conducted by the Lay Eucharistic Minister is no substitute for the gathering of God's people who give thanks and break bread together. This is no substitute for the full Mass in the field, but with fewer and older Catholic chaplains it is unrealistic to expect it.

As the Brigade Chaplain for the 1st Bde 5th Mech, and one who has served troops all over the world, I am excited about a LEM program that is the best I have seen. I'm still praying for more priests, but until then, the Lay Eucharistic Minister is the answer.

Father, you deserve a break today.

Have a LEM of a Day.



## The Unit Ministry Team And Training At The NTC

Chaplain (MAJ) Jesse L. Thornton

Two old-timers went hunting for moose in the forests of northwestern Maine. When the pilot of their tiny seaplane let them off on the shore of the lake, he told them that he would return in three days. But before leaving, he reminded them, "This is a small craft, and there is only room for the two of you and one moose!"

Three days later when the pilot came back for the veteran hunters, he was enraged to discover along with the two men, two moose, and huge ones, at that. The pilot's temper erupted, but the two old men just looked at each other in surprise and responded, "Funny, the fella last year didn't get mad." The spirit of competition surged through the pilot's veins, and he abandoned all practical judgement, agreed to take both hunters and both animals. After everyone crammed into the tiny plane, the pilot was ready. It took forever to get off the lake, and the little plane barely cleared the trees on the far shore. A quarter of a mile from the takeoff, the seaplane, unable to gain any altitude with all that weight, clipped a high pine and crashed. Pieces of its wings and moose antlers went in all directions.

Finally, one of the old hunters managed to pull his head out of the moss, spied his colleague a short distance away, and asked, "Where are we?" His companion replied, "Oh about a hundred yards farther than last year!"

Like the two old-timers in this scenario, The United States Army Chaplaincy is asking the same question with regard to chaplain training for ministry in combat. Where are we? I raise this question



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specifically as it applies to the training of chaplains and chaplain assistants, the Unit Ministry Team, that participate with their units in exercises at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. In April of 1985 I spent approximately three weeks observing Unit Ministry Teams at the National Training Center. I worked closely with the observer/controller personnel from the NTC Operations Group. The comments in this article are my reflections on the Unit Ministry Team and the opportunities for training at the National Training Center.

Please notice that I use the word *training* in connection with the functioning of the Unit Ministry Team at the NTC. For every soldier in the line units that come to the National Training Center, the NTC is the place where they experience simulated combat conditions. They train in these conditions, and they are evaluated on their execution of AirLand Battle doctrine. But what about the training and evaluation of the UMTs? Should they be trained and evaluated in the same way? Can the UMT train for ministry? Based on my observations in California, all these questions can be answered affirmatively.

The National Training Center provides a simulated combat environment in which training for ministry can and does take place. Rotating line units use ARTEP tasks, conditions, and standards, based upon likely combat contingency missions, to evaluate the effectiveness of their preparation and execution. Their training is an extension of the Army Training and Evaluation Program and is based on the TRAIN-EVALUATE-TRAIN concept. Unit Ministry Teams can and should participate fully in this concept and in this practice at the National Training Center.

In June of 1985 the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School provided input to the Personnel Service Support Common Module developed by the Soldier Support Center at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. This module provided training and evaluation outlines for personnel service support missions in battalions. It was designed for inclusion in unit ARTEPS. I mention this because it represents a step toward the inclusion of the Unit Ministry Teams in training and evaluation. Units are beginning to develop combat scenarios that include missions and tasks for the Unit Ministry Teams. When unit ARTEPS include scenarios for the UMT, a vital opportunity is grasped for the training and evaluation of ministry.

During my three weeks at the National Training Center, I observed and participated in the TRAIN-EVALUATE-TRAIN concept. I worked closely with the S1 controller/observer from the Operations Group. The S1 and I observed the UMT at battalion level and provided an evaluation during the After Action Review (AAR). The AAR at the National Training Center is a review of training that allows soldiers to discover for themselves what happened in the

training and why. An After Action Review *is not* a critique; it does not judge success or failure but focuses on lessons learned.

For the rotation that I observed, the chaplain was present and active in AAR process. Time and time again he emphasized to me the value of these reviews for the UMT. The AAR process gave the opportunity for the UMT to assess its ministry and learn lessons useful in future ministry on the battlefield. How often do we have such an opportunity as this to evaluate and train for ministry? One can only compare it with seminary days or to an experience such as Clinical Pastoral Education. When UMTs participate in After Action Reviews, constructive feedback is provided from the evaluation of training as it has just occurred. From the lessons learned in the AARs, the Unit Ministry Teams can continue to train for ministry. By their participation in this process, they become a active in the TRAIN-EVALUATE-TRAIN concept that their units are experiencing. In my opinion every training exercise provides a time for evaluation and feedback, and this is especially true at the NTC.

I offer the following suggestions to those Unit Ministry Teams that participate in training at the National Training Center. These suggestions are strictly based on my observations and reflections on my time in California. I have shared these thoughts with chaplains and assistants that have spent far more time at the NTC than I, and for the most part, they have confirmed my thinking.

First, go to the National Training Center to train for ministry. I am fully aware that much of the time of the UMT will be spent ministering to the day-to-day, real world, needs of soldiers. No special scenarios are required for the generation of these needs. The training itself, with its inherent anxieties and dangers will produce them. But there will also be time to train for ministry in a simulated combat environment.

This combat environment, unique to Fort Irwin, provides very important questions, and answers for the Unit Ministry Team. How is the Unit Ministry Team to effectively move and communicate on the AirLand battlefield? Does it move at random and operate in an “administrative” posture? A thorough knowledge of FM 16-5, “*The Chaplain and Chaplain Assistant in Combat Operations*”, is required of both the chaplain and the chaplain assistant. There is no substitute for a thorough understanding of this current doctrine for ministry in the combat environment.

The Unit Ministry Team must not only know the Field Manual, it must discuss the contents of it with commanders. The commander should expect the UMT to train like the rest of the unit. My hunch is that with this knowledge and practice, the ministry of the UMT in the “real world” will improve, and perhaps more importantly, the Unit Ministry Team will learn to survive and to minister in a combat environment.



My second suggestion is for the Unit Ministry Team to participate in After Action Reviews (AAR) at the NTC. These AARs provide timely feedback and thereby enhance the training of the UMT. Let the chain of command know the Unit Ministry Team wants to be included in the process. The observer/controller with whom I worked last year was eager to provide feedback and to learn about ministry. He had a working knowledge of FM 16-5 and this knowledge improved the training of UMTs dramatically. I believe this interest in the UMT on the part of the Operations Group personnel will continue if they sense the UMT is there to train and learn.

It is very important to discuss the training of the Unit Ministry Team with commanders. I have touched on this already, but it is worth repeating. Let commanders know that the UMT will provide and execute a command religious support program at the NTC. Inform the commander that the program is much more than conducting religious rites and services and more than providing pastoral care.

Perhaps I saw most clearly the importance of this unique training for the UMT in one specific incident. During one engagement the chaplain was killed in action, and the chaplain assistant survived. Would ministry continue without the presence of a chaplain? In this case we knew it might be several hours and perhaps days before another chaplain came to the unit. I later discussed with the UMT the role of the chaplain assistant if such an event would actually happen in combat. In the discussions, we soon realized that ministry can and must continue. What we saw were many opportunities for pastoral care and comfort to soldiers after the death of the chaplain if the assistant were trained and expected to carry on the mission of the UMT. In this case, the UMT discovered for itself that ministry to soldiers must continue.

The two hunters who flew a little further the second year could see some progress. Are the Unit Ministry teams that go to the National training Center any farther along now in their training than last year? The UMTs that have been to the NTC know the challenges it offers and the benefits to be gained. I am convinced when Unit Ministry Teams train for ministry, they can and will be more effective. The National Training Center offers that challenge and opportunity.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle*

Richard Holmes

The Free Press, a division of Macmillan, Inc., New York, 1986, 423 pages.

This book must be read by all military chaplains. It is a systematic treatment of what happens to soldiers from the time they enter the military fraternity until they are discharged as combat veterans.

Holmes offers his readers "a study of the soldier's feelings and behavior from his training for war through his experience of battle, and on to its aftermath." His focus is the battlefield experience.

The author's perspective is at the level of the combatant, rather than the strategic or operational focus that characterizes most military histories. The latter works frequently by-pass the common soldier, but it is the overlooked combatant who must face enemy fire, risk death and dismemberment, suffer loss of comrades, deal with guilt and grief, and somehow survive the ordeal of war. He must kill or be killed by his brother, the enemy.

Religion is seen as a sustaining element for soldiers under fire, and the writer's views on this subject will be of particular interest to chaplains.

The white heat of ideology or the burning zeal of religion may sustain the few, or even, at particular moments in world history, inspire the many . . . For the key to what makes men fight . . . we must look hard at military groups and bonds that link the men within them. (p. 291)

Despite this observation, religion helps soldiers cope with the trauma of battle. The need for spiritual comfort led World War II German units without chaplains to borrow them from adjacent units. "Crusading" chaplains were not well accepted by soldiers.

The writer's research includes experiential accounts ranging from the ancient age of the Greeks to the British Falkland War. He has researched diaries, small unit histories, letters, and battle records

from front line actions. These have been woven into a thorough analysis of the human reactions to the dangers of the battlefield. The human responses to battle are consistent and predictable: loneliness, terror, horror and guilt.

The writer is British, but he is eclectic in his use of materials. He looks at the induction and training of new recruits; separation from home and loved ones; virgin soldiers, baptism of fire, and first blood; the bonding process, the strain and breaking point of soldiers; the language, thinking, and emotions under fire; motivation and cohesion of men and units; the regimental system's strengths and weaknesses; and the re-introduction of the warrior into a peaceful world. Such a work, of necessity, relies on voluminous quantities of resource documents. Holmes uses these effectively without letting his study become an anthology of quotations. His thematic approach and organization, as well as his lucid style of presentation, make for excellent analysis.

*Acts of War* is a first-rate work.

Chaplain (LTC) William L. Hufham  
USA

### *Religion and the Unconscious*

Ann and Barry Ulanov

Westminster Press, 1975, 287 pages.

For some students and practitioners in the disciplines of religion and psychology, the word *and* in the title of this book is more than a mere conjunction; it is actually a boundary not to be crossed, especially during working hours. Ann and Barry Ulanov recognize the existence of boundaries; but in this book, they "traverse the boundaries between religion and the unconscious again and again . . . exploring the changes that occur in depth psychology and theology as a result of the encounters between them." The Ulanovs describe and demonstrate a "collective use of these disciplines," in which each is open to the other.

This book is as important for its method as for its message. Persons seeking help do not often draw neat disciplinary distinctions; seldom do they describe their problems in recognizable diagnostic categories. Chaplains and other professional helpers need at least minimal knowledge and appreciation of each other's languages and concepts in order to work together effectively with persons in need.

The Ulanovs take as a point of departure for their book the same ground that cooperative helping professionals often choose: some aspect of human experience or need. The Ulanovs begin with "the pains and pleasures of human interiority." Religion and



depth psychology are both concerned with this interiority, and both deal with one of its essential features, what the authors call "primordial experience." The "soul," the "psyche," the "self," and the domains of religion and depth psychology are described in terms of their relationship to this "special kind of human experience."

The main concern of the Ulanovs is how these two disciplines, with all their inner diversity and complexity, can enrich each other. The way they constantly criss-cross the boundaries between the studies of the unconscious and religion can be disorienting. But the shifts between points of view accomplish for a patient reader the same result as our having two eyes which always look at things differently; both taken together afford the ability to see in depth.

From a Christian theological perspective, the Ulanov's exploration of Jesus as a symbol and sacrament, the shape of ethics since the discovery of the unconscious, and the relation between suffering and salvation all support the arguments on behalf of their collaborative study of the inner life. For religious leaders in the Christian tradition, the chapter on the prayers of intercession models the integration of religion and depth psychology at a crucial point for most Western religious traditions: intercession is not simply a form of prayer, but a way of living.

*Religion and the Unconscious* is not an easy book to read. But chaplains and others caught up in hectic helping might especially benefit from a patient and reflective reading of this book.

Chaplain (MAJ) Gregg Monroe  
USA

***Hospital Ministry:  
The Role of the Chaplain Today***

Lawrence E. Holst, Editor

Crossroads Publishing Company, 1985, Hardcover, 242 pages, \$19.95.

Lawrence E. Holst is chairman, Division of Pastoral Care at Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge, Illinois. As editor, Holst draws upon the expertise of fifteen persons from this institution whose denominational and professional backgrounds provide a rich and solid grounding for his examination of the hospital chaplaincy.

This is a book about hospital chaplains: who they are, what they do, where they work, and how they are perceived. It is intended for those who provide, receive, or in any way are involved in the delivery of pastoral care. In short, it is a book on the state of the art of hospital chaplaincy.

A central theme reflected by Holst and his staff is the philosophy of human ecology. "Human ecology is the understanding

and care of human beings as whole persons in light of their relationships to God, to themselves, their families, and the society in which they live.” (p. XIV)

With today’s technological advancements, amazing strides have been made in the diagnosis and treatment of sickness, disease, and other physical problems. With this progress however, most of the attention is focused on the technical side, leaving much of the personal struggle out of the treatment plan. It is precisely at this point where the chaplain enters the “ministry of dialogue” with the patient. This ministry of conversation, of mutual exchange of ideas and feelings, both verbal and non-verbal, must be free and mutual. It requires both listening and speaking which “contribute toward another’s personal awareness, understanding, growth, and integration in emotional, spiritual, social, and interpersonal dimensions of life.”

In providing this ministry, chaplains are compelled to listen to the voices of the suffering. In doing so the chaplain enters the struggle, hears the cries, discerns the questions, listens to the story, and joins the patient in a pilgrimage of mystery and paradox. The writers’ use of clinical data enables the reader to see at close hand the process of pastoral care and counseling in a hospital. Further, the writers share their own understanding of the theory of pastoral care.

This book would be useful to the full time hospital chaplain who works in depth with patients regularly, and to the chaplain who periodically visits his or her soldiers and family members who are hospitalized. Key to the whole process of delivering pastoral care in a hospital setting is an understanding of the role one plays as chaplain. To many health care providers, the chaplain’s role is an enigma. To some chaplains, an understanding of their role in such a setting is equally enigmatic. Holst addresses this problem with clarity and affords the reader the opportunity to reflect upon and refine his understanding of hospital ministry.

The first part of the book, “Context and Identity,” addresses the conflicting worlds of the hospital chaplain, as a “minister of paradox.” The minister works in the “breach,” between life and death, the church and the hospital, sickness and health. The second part of the book, “Listening to the Voices of Suffering,” focuses on the experiences of eight chaplains working in specific areas: pediatrics, surgery, cancer and coronary care, psychiatry, obstetrics, and substance abuse. The third section of the book, “The Hospital Chaplain: Many Other Functions,” addresses the chaplain’s role as administrator, educator, mobilizer of lay persons and as ethicist. The book’s final section, “The Hospital Chaplain in the Future,” assesses

the impact of changing patterns of health care delivery on the chaplaincy and deals specifically with the financial constraints facing hospitals today and tomorrow.

Chaplain (MAJ) Robin L. Aplet  
USA

***Generation to Generation***  
***Family Process in Church and Synagogue***

Edwin H. Friedman

Guilford Press, New York, 1985, Hardcover, 319 pages.

Rabbi Edwin H. Friedman is a lecturer and conducts a family training center for clergy and other helping professionals in Bethesda, Maryland. He is a former student of Murray Bowen.

*Generation to Generation* is an in-depth survey of family systems therapy counselling. While the author presupposes some knowledge on the part of the reader with regard to family therapy, the book is neither too technical for the novice in this area, nor too general for the reader well versed in the theory of family counseling.

The book is well balanced between theory and case studies. It is well written in an easy style, yet no content seems to have been sacrificed for readability. Rabbi Friedman relates his material to both the traditional family as well as to the family with an unconventional structure.

This book is a good primer for the young chaplain as he deals with the varied counseling situations of a first assignment. It is also a good review for older, more experienced chaplains, providing additional insight and suggestions for those who provide care to families.

Chaplain (CPT) Thomas C. Condry  
USA

***The Living Testament***  
***The Essential Writings of Christianity Since the Bible***

Edited by M. Basil Pennington, Alan Jones, and Mark Booth

Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1986, Softcover, 382 pages, \$14.95

M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., is a spiritual teacher and monk of St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts. Alan Jones is dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Mark Booth is the publisher of Firethorn Press, Great Britain. Both Pennington and Jones have separately authored a number of books on Christian spirituality.

How long has it been since you read the ancient church fathers? Origen, Athanasius, Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose, or Augustine? I



must admit that I've not taken one of their writings off the shelf intentionally since I left seminary. I have, however, not lost my interest in exploring them further "some day." I jumped at the chance to review this compilation; I was intrigued, and surprised, and rewarded as a result.

I was intrigued by the author's purpose which rose from a concern that "To most people, Christian spiritual wisdom is a closed book. St. Jerome, St. Francis, John Calvin, and George Fox, though their names are known, go unread. The intention here is to open that book and to make accessible the vast body of Christian writings by concentrating its best, most readable works in one volume." To achieve this purpose, the editors move rapidly to include European and American Christian thought which incorporates Luther, Wesley, Barth, C.S. Lewis, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mother Theresa and Billy Graham.

Would you have put Martin Luther King, Thomas a Kempis, St. Ignatius, and Billy Graham together on the same list — or in the same book? That was the surprise! King's "I've Been To The Mountaintop," and Graham's "Open Your Heart Today," are surely the equal of the majority of the selections chosen — and of more value than many.

The reward? It came in renewing old acquaintances and forming new ones -- sharing in the agony and joy of the spiritual life, in sitting quietly for a while with my thoughts and those of Christians of other times and places. For the busy chaplain who longs for a deeper experience of spiritual life and strength for the lonely hours, there is no better place than in the exalted company of those who share themselves in this book.

Chaplain (COL) Richard R. Tupy, Jr.  
USA, Retired

### *Man and Woman, He Made Them*

Jean Vanier

Paulist Press, 1985, Softcover, 177 pages, \$6.95.

Jean Vanier is the founder of the L'Arche Christian Communities for persons with mental handicaps. Headquartered in Trosly, France, he draws on over twenty years of experience in Christian community life.

Life's lessons often come from unexpected places. The least likely avenue becomes the highway of learning. This truth comes to full focus in this insightful book on human sexuality. The unexpected teachers are the "wounded" men and women, the mentally handicapped, with whom Jean Vanier lives and works. Both his book and

the L'Arch Communities which he founded proclaim every individual's need for harmony in his "love" life. Vanier writes, "... sexuality should never be separated from love . . . the Good News of Jesus is a reality of love." From this basis, Vanier presents the covenant community as the place where love is experienced in its fullest.

In relating the experiences of the community members and assistants, Jean Vanier makes them our teachers. As he explores their need for relationships, intimacy, fecundity and celebration, he exposes the heartfelt desire of every man and woman. He elevates human sexuality above genital contact and proclaims it to "be a cry to create permanent bonds in order to escape isolation." Perhaps Vanier's greatest service to the reader is to help him discover that sexuality can be a search for "pleasures which nourish and open one up from those pleasure which imprison, pleasures which bring true fulfillment from those which are only passing illusions."

The real strength of this book goes beyond its insights into intimacy and sexuality. Its strength lies in its proclamation on the importance of covenant living. Very few books give witness to the healing power brought by authentic and liberating relationships as this book does. The reader of this book will come to a new and moving vision of covenant — and of God.

Chaplain (MAJ) Gary D. Perkins  
USA

### *Merton By Those Who Knew Him Best*

Paul Wilkes (editor)

Harper and Row, 1984, Hardcover, 171 pages, \$12.95.

Nearly twenty years ago, on December 10, 1968, Thomas Merton died in Bangkok, Thailand. Yet Father Louis, Uncle Louie as he is known to his novices, continues to fascinate those interested in spiritual searches. Here in Paul Wilkes' book, we have a collection of remembrances of twenty people who knew Merton well. From them emerges a portrait of Merton as a man, a friend, a Trappist monk and a searcher.

One of the most striking themes from their memories of Merton is his self contradiction. He lived as a hermit at the end of his life, yet craved people, feasting upon conversation and correspondence with thousands of people. A second theme was his difficulty with Dom James Fox, his abbot for twenty years. W. H. "Ping" Ferry quotes Merton: "Ping, poverty, that's a cinch. Chastity, well, that takes a little getting used to, but that's manageable. Obedience, that's the bugger."

Once Merton entered Gethsemani, some of his friends believed that they had heard the last of him. Mark Van Doren is quoted by Robert Giroux, "We'll never hear from him again. He's taken a vow of silence, he can't write to us nor we to him—he's leaving the world." Fortunately, Van Doren, was wrong. James Laughlin who published twelve of Merton's works speaks of how Merton transformed souls with his writing. More than one person, including this reviewer, could have spoken as this friend did, "Well, I read his book, and I discovered that was my story. His story was my story. So I identified with him . . . "

Collectively, his friends saw Merton as a holy man who wrote on a deep level of his mystical search; a friend who often was asked for advice but who seldom gave it because he felt inadequate; One who listened with his heart, and who seldom condemned or judged. Their memories will spark an interest in those who are hearing of Merton for the first time; and for long-time fellow travelers of Merton, the book will deepen their appreciation. Maurice Flood, a Trappist, sums up Merton's influence this way: "He came back to Gethsemani finally in a big casket. His body passed out of view, but he's been living in our hearts all this time. He's living in each of us now, and we are grateful for that. That's what gives us the courage and the strength, the buoyancy to go on, knowing that this man has gone before us."

Paul F. Bauer, Th.D.  
North East, Maryland





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